Commentary
January 2005

Why the Democrats Keep Losing

Joshua Muravchik

Arafat Lives
Efraim Karsh

Americanism—and Its Enemies
David Gelernter

What Is Cynthia Ozick About?
Hillel Halkin

The Intifada Comes to Duke
Eric Adler & Jack Langer

Sartre vs. Camus
Algis Valiunas

Haydn!
Terry Teachout

Books in Review
Sam Schulman • Kay S. Hymowitz • David Hazony
Jonathan Kay • Kevin Shapiro

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Koret Foundation is a major force in revitalizing Israel's economy.

Since 1994, Koret Israel Economic Development Funds (KIEDF) has channeled more than $73 million in financing to 2,000 small businesses to sustain more than 11,500 jobs.

Koret provides a strategic response to Israel's economic crisis.

Koret Fellowships are granted to exemplary post graduates to address impediments to free-market expansion in Israel. As economists, they develop business-friendly policies; working for Knesset members and government regulators, they are often able to effect policy change.

"Koret's program compelled the Israeli government to base its own small-business loan program on Koret's model."

—Ehud Olmert, Minister of Industry, Trade and Employment

KORET SINCE 1979
FOUNDATION

Supporting free-market solutions

www.koretfoundation.org
www.afkiedf.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

Vol. 119 · January 2005 · No. 1

Articles

21

Why the Democrats Keep Losing *Joshua Muravchik*
Many things seemed promising for the party last year; what happened?

33

Arafat Lives *Efraim Karsh*
So long as men of his kind remain in power, it is fantasy to suppose that Arabs and Israelis can forge, or be forced into, a lasting peace.

41

Americanism—and Its Enemies *David Gelernter*
The country's essence is religious, and the elements of its democratic creed can be traced to surprising sources.

49

What Is Cynthia Ozick About? *Hillel Halkin*
As a writer of fiction and as an essayist she is in a class by herself.

Observations

56

The Intifada Comes to Duke *Eric Adler & Jack Langer*
Under the cover of "dialogue," a university plays host to apologists for terrorism.

59

Sartre vs. Camus *Algis Valiunas*
Their famous political dispute was won not by the "more intelligent" man but by the better one.

Music

63

Haydn! *Terry Teachout*
He embraced the world as it is, and his brilliant, unpredictable, life-enhancing music shows it.

Letters

3

Jewish interests; Putin's Russia; Taiwan; Noam Chomsky; etc.

Books

67 I Am Charlotte Simmons by Tom Wolfe *Sam Schulman*

70 American Dream by Jason DeParle *Kay S. Hymowitz*

74 Abraham's Promise by Michael Wyschogrod, ed. by R. Kendall Soulen *David Hazony*

78 Miracle Cure by Sally C. Pipes *Jonathan Kay*

82 On Intelligence by Jeff Hawkins with Sandra Blakeslee *Kevin Shapiro*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editor	Neal Kozodoy
Senior Editor	Gabriel Schoenfeld
Managing Editor	Gary Rosen
Assistant Editor	David Billet
Editor-at-Large	Norman Podhoretz
Business Director	Sarah M. Stern
Business Associate	Ilya Leyzerzon
Sales Representative	Del Fidanque
Production Manager	Barbara A. Blake
Special Assistant	Davi Bernstein

COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the American Jewish Committee. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Telephone: (212) 891-1400. Fax: (212) 891-6700. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Letters intended for publication may be edited. Single copy is $4.50; $45 a year, 2 years $79, 3 years $109. Add $11.00 per year for subscriptions to Canada and Mexico, $19.00 for all other foreign destinations. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Copyright © 2005 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions.

Indexed in *Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, and elsewhere. U.S. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A. All back issues are available in electronic form at www.commentarymagazine.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE:
(800) 829-6270
service@commentarymagazine.com
EDITORIAL INQUIRIES:
editorial@commentarymagazine.com
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
letters@commentarymagazine.com
ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:
advertising@commentarymagazine.com
WEBSITE: www.commentarymagazine.com

The Commentary Publication Committee

Michael W. Schwartz, *Chairman*

Stanford M. Adelstein
Norman E. Alexander
Maurice S. Binkow
Howard I. Friedman
Roger Hertog
Morton A. Kornreich
Peter N. Marron
Jay Meltzer
Herman J. Obermayer
Robert L. Pelz
Gordon S. Rosenblum
Gary L. Rosenthal
Michael Saperstein
Nanette Scofield
Henry Sherman
Walter P. Stern
Thomas J. Tisch

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

American Jewish Committee
E. Robert Goodkind, *President*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
January 2005

Letters from Readers

Good for the Jews?

To the Editor:

Jack Wertheimer has made major contributions to our understanding of the American Jewish condition and is one of the cannier observers of American Jewish life, but his critique of the current state of the communal agenda is both wrongheaded and just plain wrong ["Jewish Security & Jewish Interests," October 2004].

Contrary to what Mr. Wertheimer suggests, Jewish groups have not, through some kind of anachronistic and misguided liberalism, "formulated 'positions' on every conceivable matter of public interest," matters that are "far removed from the defense of Jewish security." American Jews have always chosen their priorities with Jewish security in mind. Not even the most unreconstructed 1950's liberal would deny pride of place on the communal agenda to support for Israel, combating anti-Semitism, and the separation of church and state.

But Mr. Wertheimer's conception of Jewish security is too narrow. In America, it does not mean just the absence of persecution. Jewish security is ensured by the health of society across a range of parameters. Civil rights and church-state separation have been supported by American Jews not because of the community's liberalism or because we are "nice guys," but out of Jewish self-interest.

Mr. Wertheimer's idea that elements of the communal agenda have been arrived at "without any debate"—as though there were some kind of liberal cabal pulling the strings—is absurd. Each agency has its own procedures, and some, to be sure, consult less with their membership than others. But with very few exceptions, the official stances of Jewish agencies generally reflect the views of the Jewish populace. There is no end to the polls of American Jews that consistently confirm this. There is a healthy debate within and among the agencies about what is central to Jewish security and should therefore top the agenda. Mr. Wertheimer just does not like the outcome.

Jerome A. Chanes
Stern and Barnard Colleges
New York City

To the Editor:

Jack Wertheimer's well-reasoned and thoughtful article on "Jewish Security & Jewish Interests" should evoke serious self-questioning by the leaders of American Jewish organizations. Mr. Wertheimer is correct to observe that the positions of many Jewish agencies on a plethora of issues have had more to do with their vision of what America should be than with defending Jewish interests, narrowly defined. Their rationale is that a liberal, pluralistic, tolerant America that safeguards individual rights to privacy and separates church and state is best for Jews.

As a past president of the American Jewish Committee, I, for one, subscribe to this vision. But I also wonder whether, in its quest to create "a more perfect union," the organized Jewish community has at times lost sight of where Jewish interests lie. For example, it was shortsighted of Jewish organizations to support the Voting Rights Act of 1982 to ensure minority representation in Congress. The result was a loss of safe Jewish seats. Is gay marriage a Jewish issue? I doubt it. Even the sacred cow of liberal immigration policies needs to be looked at realistically by American Jewish organizations.

Jews also need to be sensitive to the moral concerns of other groups in our society—including the Christian Right, which is legitimately troubled about things like pornography and efforts to eliminate prayer or any mention of God from the few public spaces where it is still permitted. We need to ask ourselves whether we are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

driving a wedge between ourselves and our fellow Americans when we spend political capital on issues of marginal or no real concern to us.

But Mr. Wertheimer's article raises a more fundamental issue that he does not squarely address. To what extent should the defense of Israel overshadow other Jewish interests? There is an understandable reluctance on the part of most American Jewish organizations to think of themselves as concerned primarily with Israel. Contrary to what many think, Jews do not decide their vote in presidential elections based on which candidate is perceived to be better for Israel. (Historically, in any case, there has been little space between presidential candidates on this issue.) This year, an overwhelming majority of American Jews voted for John Kerry despite the Bush administration's support for Prime Minister Sharon and its portrayal of Yasir Arafat as part of the problem, not the solution. Jews vote on the basis of a "comfort" index that includes Israel but also a lot of other concerns. The body language of the candidates often counts as much as their words.

This explains why most American Jews do not view evangelicals and born-again Christians as natural allies, despite their support for Israel. Nativism, with its history of rigid intolerance, is perceived to be a greater threat to Jewish interests than the criticisms of Israel by some on the Left. American Jews are aware that the Christian Right's support for Israel is largely driven by theology, not empathy. Mr. Wertheimer may shrug off the millenarian motives of the Christian Right, but on almost every issue other than support of Israel, American Jews and the Christian Right share little.

With the exception of some disturbing incidents on our campuses, anti-Semitism from Europe, where it is spearheaded by radical Muslims, has not spilled over into the United States—a concern raised by Mr. Wertheimer at the end of his article. Most American Jews do not feel endangered by anti-Semitism at home, and clearly most do not regard the growing number of Americans who identify as evangelicals or born-again Christians as a bulwark against future anti-Semitism.

AMBASSADOR ALFRED H. MOSES
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer has written a cogent and dispassionate analysis of how the Jewish community's leaders, by championing every item on the liberal agenda irrespective of the interests of the Jewish community at large, have compromised their mission to protect Jewish security. He perfectly describes Jewish leaders and agencies still bound by ancient allegiances in a world that has changed enormously under their feet.

Many of us who share Mr. Wertheimer's views can testify to the difficulty of being heard when we speak of the need to husband limited resources toward matters of compelling Jewish interest in an age that has seen an alarming increase in anti-Israel sentiment and overt anti-Semitism abroad and in many of our elite institutions at home. Yet, we can also attest to discreet murmurs of approval from those who, for fear of being thought illiberal, are reluctant or too abashed to express full-throated agreement.

Mr. Wertheimer's essay should be required reading for leaders and active members of the American Jewish community. It provides ample food for thought for anyone who may be troubled about the growing rift between the *bien-pensants* and those who still believe that *pikuah nefesh*, the obligation to preserve life, is the primary duty of us all.

HENRY SHERMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

As a politically conservative American Jew who is struggling to "enlighten" the majority of his co-religionists that Jewish principles are no longer represented by modern liberalism, I welcome Jack Wertheimer's article. Seldom does one hear or read that the leading Jewish organizations are making any attempt to promote, with their unthinking allegiance to liberal ideas, basic Jewish values—monotheism, human freedom, accepting responsibility for one's actions, respecting the traditional family. It is indeed time for serious reconsideration.

LARRY F. STERNBERG
Santa Ana, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer is correct to assert that Jewish organizations have spent years focusing on the wrong causes and meddling in the weighty affairs of others. The Jews were commanded to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," not to be a secular champion of liberal causes.

Supporting Israel is certainly a priority that should continue to claim our efforts, but equal time should be devoted to promoting Judaism. The job of our leaders is to figure out how to explain the significance of Judaism in the modern world. Without that effort, we will lose a war of attrition with or without the aid of anti-Semitism.

DANIEL B. GELMAN
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR:

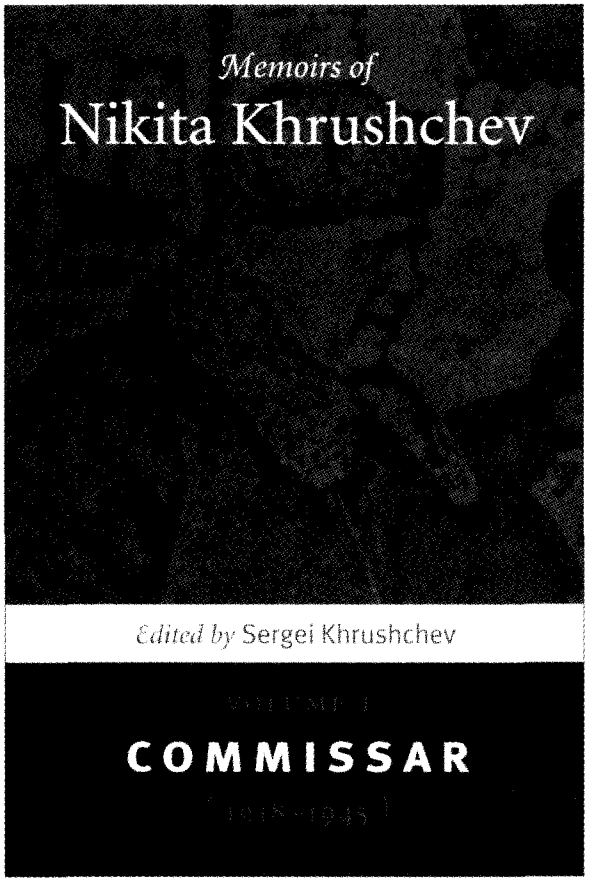
One point from Jack Wertheimer's article was driven home to me a little over a year ago when I moved to a small town in Indiana. My next-door neighbor came over to offer a welcome, and asked if I belonged to a church. When I replied that I was Jewish, he told me how much he admired Israel and asked if he could give me copies of a magazine, to which I have since subscribed, called *Friends of Israel*. I read the magazine with utter amazement. Such a positive view of Israel and Judaism! Prudence suggests that Jews ought to embrace the support of friends, especially those, like evangelical Christians, whose value system is more in tune with Jewish tradition than the wildly leftist, self-destructive mainstream of the Jewish establishment.

ALBERT H. FINK
Vincenes, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR:

Jack Wertheimer's article refers to "the allegedly quietistic posture adopted by American Jewish groups during the Holocaust years, a posture that in retrospect is said to have issued in even greater harm being done to European Jews." But it is not merely in retrospect that this point has been made. In August 1943, Ben Halpern, soon to emerge as one of the most prominent American Jewish historians, wrote that while the Allies were to blame for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"One of the most extraordinary archives of the twentieth century"

—Strobe Talbott, former U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of State

MEMOIRS OF NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV

VOLUME 1: COMMISSAR, 1918–1945

Edited by Sergei Khrushchev

"Nikita Khrushchev was one of the most important political leaders of the twentieth century. Without his memoirs, neither the rise and fall of the Soviet Union nor the history of the Cold War can be fully understood. By dictating his memoirs and publishing them in the West, Khrushchev transformed himself from the USSR's leader to one of its first dissidents. His remarkably candid recollections were a harbinger of glasnost to come. Like virtually all memoirs, his have a personal and political agenda, but even what might be called Khrushchev's 'myth of himself' is vital for understanding how this colorful figure could place his contradictory stamp on his country and the world. The fact that the full text of Khrushchev's memoirs will now be available in English is cause for rejoicing." —William Taubman, winner of the 2004 National Book Critics Circle Award and the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for his book *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*

Nikita Khrushchev's proclamation from the floor of the United Nations that "we will bury you" is one of the most chilling and memorable moments in the history of the Cold War, but from the Cuban Missile Crisis to his criticism of the Soviet ruling structure late in his career the motivation for Khrushchev's actions wasn't always clear. Many Americans regarded him as a monster, while in the USSR he was viewed at various times as either hero or traitor. But what was he really like, and what did he really think?

Readers of Khrushchev's memoirs will now be able to answer these questions for themselves (and will discover that what Khrushchev really said at the UN was "we will bury colonialism"). This is the first volume of three in what will be the only complete and fully reliable version of the memoirs available in English. In this volume Khrushchev recounts how he became politically active as a young worker in Ukraine, how he climbed the ladder of power under Stalin to occupy leading positions in Ukraine and then Moscow, and how as a military commissar he experienced the war against the Nazi invaders. He vividly portrays life in Stalin's inner circle and among the generals who commanded the Soviet armies. Khrushchev's sincere reflections upon his own thoughts and feelings add to the value of this unique personal and historical document.

Included among the appendices is Sergei Khrushchev's account of how the memoirs were created and smuggled abroad during his father's retirement.

1008 pages | 57 illustrations/11 maps | $55.00 cloth

penn state press

820 N. University Drive, USB 1, Suite C | University Park, PA 16802 | fax 1-877-778-2665 | www.psupress.org

AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES, OR ORDER TOLL FREE 1-800-326-9180

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doing so little to rescue Jews from the Nazis,

> shame and contrition, because we have not done enough, weigh even more heavily upon the Jews of the free countries. Not only do we have the greater responsibility of kinsmen, but our own weakness may be one of the causes why so little has been done. The history of our times will one day make bitter reading, when it records that some Jews were so morally uncertain that they denied they were obligated to risk their own safety in order to save other Jews who were being done to death abroad.

One important exception to Halpern's lament was the small but determined group of student activists at the institution where Mr. Wertheimer is provost and professor, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS). In early 1943, a group there led by Noah Golinkin, Jerome Lipnick, and Moshe Sachs organized an unprecedented Jewish-Christian conference at which hundreds of attendees learned about the plight of European Jewry and discussed possibilities for rescue. The JTS students also successfully lobbied national organizations to launch a publicity campaign about the Nazi genocide. Synagogues around the country adopted the proposals to recite special prayers for European Jewry, limit "occasions of amusement," observe partial fast days and moments of silence, write letters to political officials and Christian religious leaders, and hold memorial protest rallies.

The fact that these efforts owe their origins to the initiative of a handful of JTS students makes one wonder how much more might have been accomplished if major Jewish organizations had shown similar spirit and energy.

RAFAEL MEDOFF
David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies
Melrose Park, Pennsylvania

JACK WERTHEIMER writes:

Jerome A. Chanes rebuts points I did not make while ignoring the overall argument of my article.

First, he accuses me of not noticing the priority placed by "the communal agenda" on support for Israel and combating anti-Semitism. In fact I acknowledged and discussed these efforts at length. But I also criticized the diversion of energies and resources to matters far removed from these core issues of Jewish self-interest. To read Mr. Chanes's letter, one would never know that "the communal agenda" gives great weight to such burning Jewish "interests" as the status of immigrants infected with AIDS, gun-safety legislation, flag burning, and term limits. Whether or not such causes are supported by "the Jewish populace," they are marginal to core Jewish concerns and are already addressed by a panoply of nonsectarian groups.

In this connection, Mr. Chanes wrenches out of context my remark about the absence of debate. What I wrote was that there was little or no discussion "about whether it was good for Jewish groups to be taking vocal stances on a wide spectrum of issues, still less about whether the positions taken might not create as many foes as they would win friends." Mr. Chanes offers no evidence of a debate about such strategic questions affecting the "communal agenda," and indeed his letter altogether ignores my central contention—that times have changed, American society has been transformed, and the place of Jews is no longer the same as it was when that agenda was first formulated in such expansive terms. Instead, he simply defends the business-as-usual approach that my article set out to challenge.

Symptomatic is Mr. Chanes's repeated and unqualified invocation of "church-state separation" as a Jewish interest. Given that the First Amendment requires such separation, the real issue is not whether Jews ought to support it but how they should understand its meaning. To take an example recently in the news: in France, where church-state separation is also the law of the land, the state has banned religious head-coverings in public institutions like schools. In the French understanding, such a ban is implicit in church-state separation. Yet the organizations of the Jewish community in the United States, basing themselves on the "free exercise" clause of the First Amendment, support legislation *protecting* the right of Americans to wear religious garb in the workplace. The debate in the United States, then, is not over the principle of church-state separation but over its proper application.

Regrettably, Jewish leaders, even as they favor certain accommodations, fuel the current hysteria over separationism when they suggest that the "wall" will crumble if it is not impermeable. Some 50 years ago, as Jewish organizations were first embracing the separationist faith, they at least acknowledged that no "frontal attack" was imminent on a principle "so deeply ingrained in our tradition." The danger, nevertheless, lay in "watering down, evasion, circumvention, and compromise." It is evident today that so rigidly uncompromising an approach does not work—even for Jewish groups.

I am grateful to Alfred H. Moses for his own "serious self-questioning" of positions once supported by institutions he has led. Some Jewish organizations themselves do seem prepared to rethink, while others remain mired in the past even as they celebrate their "progressive" ideals.

I wish to stress that my article did not address the voting preferences of American Jews, but rather institutional strategies and alliances. Fortunately, it is rarely the case that Jewish organizations must weigh the interests of Israel against those of American Jews. Rather, the central question, as Ambassador Moses puts it well, is "whether we are driving a wedge between ourselves and our fellow Americans when we spend political capital on issues of marginal or no real concern to us" as a group.

I agree that evangelical support for Israel is confusing to many American Jews. I also agree that most American Jews *seem* to share little with adherents of the Christian Right. As a traditional Jew, I lament the closed minds of many of my coreligionists toward Jewish teachings and values that in fact converge at some points with evangelical teachings. Simply put, if more American Jews were animated by their own religious tradi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Philosophical Society

Scholarly publishing since 1771

MEMOIRS

JAMES BOWDOIN AND THE PATRIOT PHILOSOPHERS
Frank E. and Fritzie P. Manuel

A history of the early years of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the life and career of James Bowdoin, the Academy's first president, are given careful consideration. The work is, by turns, witty, learned, and often simply fascinating.
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 247 • $40
ISBN: 0-87169-247-3

AMERICA'S CURIOUS BOTANIST: A TERCENTENNIAL REAPPRAISAL OF JOHN BARTRAM (1699-1777)
Nancy E. Hoffmann and John C. Van Horne

Commemorating the three-hundredth anniversary of John Bartram's birth, these essays tell the story of the multifaceted Bartram, whose life spanned most of the eighteenth century and who was called "the greatest natural botanist in the world."
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 249 • $40
ISBN: 0-87169-249-X

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE SANSKRIT ASTRONOMICAL MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED AT THE MAHARAJA MAN SINGH II MUSEUM IN JAIPUR, INDIA
David Pingree

This catalogue provides a substantial part of the foundation for an extensive and penetrating analysis of the astronomical activities of Sawäï Jayasimha Maharaja from 1700 to 1743.
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 250 • $20
ISBN: 0-87169-250-3

BACCIO BANDINELLI AND ART AT THE MEDICI COURT: A CORPUS OF EARLY MODERN SOURCES
Louis A. Waldman

Based on a decade of research in archives throughout Italy, this work brings Baccio Bandinelli into sharp focus for modern scholarship and presents a rich, balanced, and at times surprising picture of the artist. All of Bandinelli's major artistic commissions are fully documented, as is his establishment of one of the earliest artistic academies.
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 251 • $60
ISBN: 0-87169-251-1

CARDINAL PIETRO OTTOBONI (1667-1740) AND THE VATICAN TOMB OF POPE ALEXANDER VIII
Edward J. Olszewski

Although neglected for centuries, the Ottoboni monument occupies the most strategic liturgical position in the complex of tombs in the Vatican basilica. Using unpublished archival documents in the Vatican and Lateran archives, this study examines in detail the thirty-year campaign for the construction of the tomb and identifies the artists and artisans responsible for the project.
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 252 • $60
ISBN: 0-87169-252-X

THE MAECENAS AND THE MADRIGALIST: PATRONS, PATRONAGE, AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ITALIAN MADRIGAL
Anthony M. Cummings

Through references to sources multidisciplinary in nature, this monograph reconstructs the memberships, cultural activities, and musical experiences of sixteenth-century informal Florentine institutions of patronage and relates them to the emergence of the madrigal, the foremost secular musical genre of early modern Europe.
Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 253 • $50
ISBN: 0-87169-253-8

TRANSACTIONS

STUDIES ON THE NEOPLATONIST HIEROCLES
Ilsetraut Hadot (translated by Michael Chase)

Neoplatonism from the fourth to sixth centuries proposed a highly complex ontological hierarchy. We find in Hierocles' works a philosophical system situated midway between the systems of Iamlichus on the one hand, and Syrianus and Proclus on the other.
Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 94, Pt. 1 • $24
ISBN: 0-87169-941-9

EXPLORING THE BORDERLANDS: DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMON PROBLEMS OF GENETICS, PALEONTOLOGY, AND SYSTEMATICS, 1943-1944
Joe Cain (ed.) (Foreword by Ernst Mayr)

The Committee on Common Problems provided a crucial foothold for those seeking a synthetic view of evolution in 1940s America. This monograph reproduces the six *Bulletins* of the Committee, together with its one *Report of Meetings* and related documents, and offers readers a chance to examine firsthand the Committee's activities and to reconsider questions of motivation, interaction, and influence.
Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 94, Pt. 2 • $24
ISBN: 0-87169-942-7

PLANETARY DIAGRAMS FOR ROMAN ASTRONOMY IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE, CA. 800-1500
Bruce Eastwood and Gerd Grasshoff

Using books of Pliny the Elder, Macrobius, Martianus Capella, and Calcidius, ninth-century investigators expanded astronomy far beyond what had been studied in the two previous centuries. This work provides a historical framework for the revival of planetary astronomy and presents the relevant texts with English translations. Each type of diagram is categorized and described in detail.
Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 94, Pt. 3 • $24
ISBN: 0-87169-943-5

"FIRST, I FIND THE CENTER POINT"*: READING THE TEXT OF HUGH OF SAINT VICTOR'S *THE MYSTIC ARK
Conrad Rudolph

Hugh of Saint Victor's *The Mystic Ark* is both the name of what may have been the most complex individual work of art from the entire Middle Ages and the forty-two-page text that describes its construction. Fundamentally political, the painting was the basis of a series of brilliant lectures at Saint Victor, in Paris, around 1125 to 1130, and was crucial in the conceptual development of the Gothic portal.
Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 94, Pt. 4 • $24
ISBN: 0-87169-944-3

THE SHORTEST AND MOST CONVENIENT ROUTE OF COMMUNICATION: LEWIS AND CLARK IN CONTEXT
Robert Cox (ed.)

Based on papers delivered at the Bicentennial Conference for Lewis and Clark, held in Philadelphia in August 2003, these essays grapple in different ways with the motives underlying the Corps of Discovery and the impact on American culture. The question of failure is used by the authors as a means of interrogating the intellectual and cultural context in which the expedition was framed and in which its results were distributed.
Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Vol. 94, Pt. 5 • $24
ISBN: 0-87169-945-1

Order online at *fulfillment@amphilsoc.org* or contact:

American Philosophical Society
P.O. Box 481
Canton, MA 02021-0481
(Tel) 800-821-7823
(Fax) 781-828-8915

Prepaid U.S. orders mailed book rate are postage free. Foreign orders, add minimum $6.00 shipping/handling (Media Mail). Expedited mailing charges at cost. Checks must be drawn on U.S. banks. Make checks payable to American Philosophical Society. VISA/MasterCard accepted. Fax orders accepted. No telephone orders, please. Also, see our website for recent catalogs and *backlist: www.aps-pub.com.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions, they might find certain areas of common ground with evangelicals. On a pragmatic level, I also wonder how Jews expect to forge successful alliances when they ignore or antagonize a group that is estimated to form between 33 and 40 percent of American voters.

Apparently, large percentages of American Jews are not as sanguine as Ambassador Moses about the future intensity of anti-Semitism on these shores. In the latest survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee, at the end of August 2004, 43 percent of respondents anticipated that anti-Semitism here will increase over the next several years. One might expect so pessimistic an assessment to prompt Jewish organizations to re-examine their strategies for insuring Jewish security.

Rafael Medoff reminds us of the activism of young Jews at a time when the organized community was divided and often passive. I too admire the energetic efforts of such activists. Mr. Medoff's example, however, reinforces my larger contention that responses to the destruction of European Jewry in World War II can hardly serve as a useful template for today's concerns, which include the impact on American Christian attitudes of Mel Gibson's Hollywood extravaganza. Not every provocation requires, or deserves, the same type of response.

I am grateful for the letters of Henry Sherman, Larry F. Sternberg, Daniel B. Gelman, and Albert H. Fink. I certainly agree with Mr. Gelman that Jewish organizations cannot afford to ignore internal attrition, even as they combat external threats.

Whither Putin?

TO THE EDITOR:

Leon Aron has long been an outstanding analyst of developments in Russia, and I largely agree with his assessment of Vladimir Putin's first term as president of Russia ["Is Russia Going Backward?," October 2004]. From 2000 to 2003, Putin balanced elegantly between his own rising circle of former KGB men from St. Petersburg and the declining oligarchs. A few liberal technocrats were even able to carry out impressive market reforms. Although the political trend was authoritarian, it was very gradual, with checks and balances prevailing.

As for Putin's second term, Mr. Aron sees continuity with the first, but I see quite a new course. Mr. Aron burdens the critics of Putin with the strawman of a "Soviet restoration," but the more immediate threat to Russia is a dysfunctional authoritarian regime. In the last few years, an extreme centralization of power to the president has taken place. Though jealous of his power, Putin now has more of it than he can manage, and is not very decisive. He has also deprived himself of strong executives, replacing his formidable chief of staff and prime minister with men famous for never making decisions. This power vacuum was obvious in the Beslan school-hostage drama. Because Putin acts as the only authoritative spokesman of his government, he is overexposed. And since his words are not always substantiated by actions, his authority may dwindle.

By depriving Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and the regional governors of much of their power, Putin also has emptied formal institutions of real content. In their place he has set up informal advisory institutions, such as the State Council and the Public Chamber, which are of little or no consequence. As the regime has changed, so too have its interests. Putin's KGB friends dominate not only the state administration but also the state-run enterprises, which are thus unlikely to see any further reform.

Mr. Aron describes how the Putin regime has skillfully manipulated the media and civil society, but Putin can only manipulate them so much before he loses credibility and authority, and that threshold has probably been crossed. The system he has created is impervious to feedback.

Mr. Aron is right to argue that Russia is not that authoritarian, but his prediction of "a political and economic arrangement that is more enduring, more stable, and more organic than what has gone before" is not very plausible. What worries me more than Russia's current authoritarian tendencies is the possibility of destabilization. Putin could have won free and fair presidential elections, but he chose not to—and therefore does not benefit from democratic legitimacy. Moreover, he has deprived of legitimacy all the institutions that could have defended him, from Parliament to regional governors.

The world has seen many excellent first-term presidents descend into authoritarianism and corruption in their second terms. Alberto Fujimori of Peru and Carlos Menem of Argentina come to mind, and Vladimir Putin may join the list.

ANDERS ÅSLUND
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Leon Aron's article is to be commended for its sober tone and balanced analysis. Too often, Western observers are tempted to underestimate Russia's virtues or overestimate its vices while discarding inconvenient facts that conflict with their preconceived notions of how things in Russia "really are." It is refreshing to find a piece that deals frankly with the positive and negative trends in today's Russia.

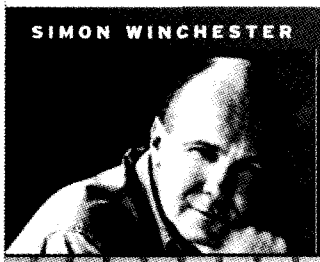
It is important to dispel the myth that Vladimir Putin "stole" victories in Russia's parliamentary and presidential elections. Mr. Aron is quite right to note that "manipulation of the media and other electoral shenanigans were hardly required in order to secure his lopsided triumph at the polls." Opinion surveys confirm that most Russians endorse Putin's vision of state-directed reform. And they agree that the first order of business is not the establishment of a liberal democracy but the continuation of orderly reform. Americans might have hoped that Russians would choose a different course, but what is now unfolding does reflect popular preferences.

Like Mr. Aron, I would take issue with those who believe that Russia is "going backward." Russia is not regressing from an idyllic democracy; the perception that the country was "freer" under Boris Yeltsin came about because the state was weak, not liberal. Currently, we are seeing the consolidation of a system best de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford Reference Sets

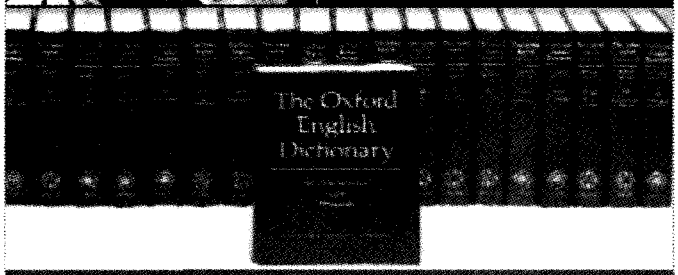
Great Writers
ARE THE SUM OF THEIR WORDS



Favorite OED WORD

chrism

Oil mingled with balm, consecrated for use as an unguent in the administration of certain sacraments in the Eastern and Western Churches.



SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFER!
Own the 20-volume OED for only $995! (list price $3,000)
ISBN 0-19-861186-2 • This offer expires 1/31/05

"No one who reads or writes seriously can be without the *OED*."
–*Washington Post*

"The most ambitious art-publishing venture of the late 20th century... An invaluable acquisition for any serious art lover, indispensable for libraries or schools." –*The New York Times*

THE DICTIONARY OF ART
34-volume set

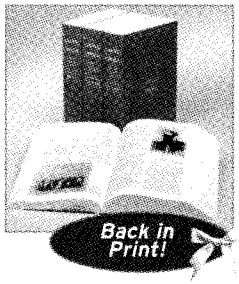
0-19-517068-7
List Price $8,800 SALE PRICE $1,200

"*The Grove* is...a magnificent achievement, and, more than that, it is a work of love."
–*New Yorker*

THE NEW GROVE DICTIONARY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS
Second Edition
29-volume set with Index

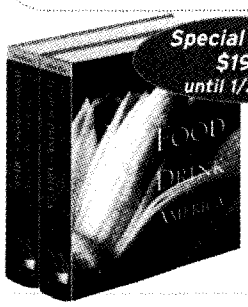
0-19-517067-9
List Price $4,850 SALE PRICE $1,500

"Make no mistake: This will be the definitive reference work in opera for many, many years to come." –*Chicago Tribune*



NEW GROVE DICTIONARY OF OPERA
4-Volume Set

0-19-522186-9
List Price $395 SALE PRICE $295

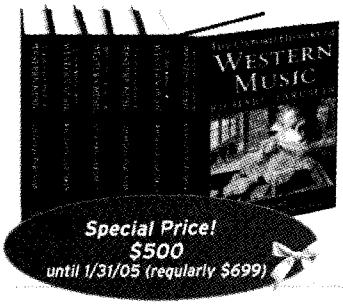


New!

THE OXFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FOOD AND DRINK IN AMERICA
2-Volume Set
Edited by Andrew F. Smith

From Coney Island to the California coast: A panoramic view of the history and culture of food and drink in America.

0-19-515437-1 $195 (through 1/31/05, $250 after)



"There is no parallel in musical scholarship for Taruskin's compendiousness, and almost none for the verve of his writing."
–*The New York Times Book Review*

New!

THE OXFORD HISTORY OF WESTERN MUSIC
6-Volume Set
Richard Taruskin

0-19-516979-4 $500 (through 1/31/05, $699 after)

Great References for Families

THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE WORLD
11-Volume Set

0-19-521698-9
List Price $350 SALE PRICE $179

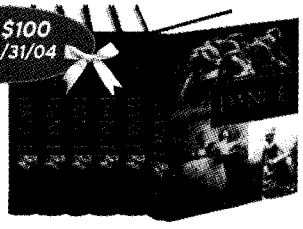
OXFORD AMERICAN CHILDREN'S ENCYCLOPEDIA, 2ND EDITION
9-Volume Set

0-19-515568-8
List Price $325 SALE PRICE $199

Now in Paperback!

INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DANCE
6-Volume Set

"The most ambitious and comprehensive dance encyclopedia ever attempted...a brilliant success."
–*Los Angeles Times*



0-19-517369-4 $295 (through 12/31/04, $395 after)

PRICES ARE GOOD THROUGH 1/31/05 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

AVAILABLE FROM ALL PARTICIPATING RETAILERS, OR DIRECTLY FROM OXFORD AT 1-800-451-7556 www.oup.com/us/commentary • promo code 24308

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scribed as "managed pluralism," the outlines of which were already clear by the second Yeltsin administration. There is some room for free enterprise and choice, but the Kremlin consciously regulates the available social, political, and economic options. Leaders can be replaced—it bears remembering that more than half the Duma turned over in the 2003 elections—but the center controls access to the public square and sets the limits of debate. Putin's vision for the future of Russian society is "state capitalism" married with "controlled democracy."

Mr. Aron's reminder that Russia's "epochal experiment in liberty" is "far from over" is often forgotten in the rush to recast Russia as a KGB dictatorship bent on subverting freedom at home and abroad. Americans who are unhappy with the restricted zone of civil, political, and economic liberties under Putin should not shy away from saying so, but the emergence of a Singapore-style regime in Russia would not be a catastrophic defeat for freedom. There are hopeful signs that the groundwork is being laid for the rise of a prosperous middle class, without which no sustainable democracy can be built. Let us not write off Russia just yet.

NIKOLAS K. GVOSDEV
The National Interest
Washington, D.C.

LEON ARON writes:

I am grateful to both Anders Åslund and Nikolas K. Gvosdev for taking the time to produce such thorough and stimulating comments. Yet, while there is much that is valuable in its own right in the critique of my article by Mr. Åslund and the endorsement of it by Mr. Gvosdev, both, like my article itself, have been largely overtaken by events.

In revolutions, Leon Trotsky wrote somewhere, life moves fast—and revolution-watchers must try to catch up with it, the imperatives of publication cycles notwithstanding. My article bore a dateline of August 27, 2004. A "tipping point" came a short while later, first in the horrific terrorism of Beslan and then in Putin's speech of September 13, in which he proposed appointing rather than electing governors. In one fell swoop, the Russian president took the country twenty years backward, casting aside perhaps the key historic achievement of Russian democracy under Yeltsin: a Russia free *and* whole for the first time in its history.

In a painful-to-watch Greek tragedy with the characters speaking in Russian, Putin seems determined to subvert a relatively stable transitional democracy and undermine a flourishing economy. By putting both under enormous stress, he risks not only destabilization but perhaps the country's territorial integrity as well. Until his September speech, Putin's statist impulses and policies could be weighed against Russia's steady progress in economic liberalization and privatization, which were critical not only for the economy but for the continuing declawing of the state's power over society. Both contradictory trends unfolded in parallel; in the absence of a clear public endorsement of one or the other by Putin, it was a matter of intuition and judgment as to which one would prevail in a clash. After September 13, Putin's choice is now almost certain.

As an avid reader of everything written by Mr. Åslund, who like myself had been firmly within the "optimist" camp of Russia-watchers over the past decade-and-a-half, I am reasonably confident that until quite recently he would have agreed with every word of my piece. Today, I would gladly say the same about his letter.

Although I am grateful to Mr. Gvosdev for his generous words, I take issue with his conclusion that Russians prefer order to liberal democracy. A number of polls over many years appear to contradict this view. Still, despite this caveat, Mr. Gvosdev's letter remains a valid antidote to the near-hysteria about Russia's triumphant dictatorship that has been brewing in the pages of our elite newspapers and which, *pace* Anders Åslund, is not a "straw-man"—one need only read, for instance, some of the recent editorials in the *Washington Post*.

What, then, of the road ahead? As the upheaval in the Ukraine shows, one should never underestimate a people's innate thirst for self-rule. Given the enormous risks of the policies that Putin seems to be adopting, and the virtually certain deterioration of his popularity (which is his regime's sole reliable resource), major crises and destabilization, provoked perhaps by further acts of terrorism, are at least as plausible a scenario for Russia's near future as renewed authoritarianism.

Two Chinas?

TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur Waldron's conclusion that the U.S. should support Taiwan is appealing, but the way he arrives at it is misleading ["Our Stake in Taiwan," October 2004]. Taiwan is deeply divided over its national identity and over whether it should ultimately unite with mainland China. In a controversial presidential election last March that is still being disputed, the pro-independence camp beat the pro-unification camp by a mere 2-percent margin. It is difficult for even a mature democratic system to handle such a fundamental social schism, let alone for a nascent democracy. That Taiwan is struggling to overcome its internal divisions through orderly, legal procedures demonstrates that its democratic system works and that it is worthy of U.S. support.

But Mr. Waldron's argument relies too heavily on Taiwan's right to self-determination as a non-Chinese nation. This is not the population's consensus, and only represents a half-truth. Taiwanese nationalism is not a natural growth from the island's historical roots. It has been manufactured in a highly charged political environment, and is as artificial and state-manipulated as the old Chinese nationalism advocated by the Kuomintang. In many nascent democracies, notably in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states, election-driven nationalism has acted to ignite ethnic strife and break up nations. One cannot be too careful in seconding such nationalistic movements, including in Taiwan.

Mr. Waldron also errs in depicting the U.S. as siding with mainland China to suppress Taiwan. On the contrary, U.S. support has been the single most important factor in Taiwan's stance against pressure from China. No U.S. administration fails

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Discover a Mathematical World of Startling Beauty and Insight...

...when you experience *The Joy of Thinking: The Beauty and Power of Classical Mathematical Ideas*—in 24 fascinating and provocative video lectures

Lovers of mathematics have always shared a secret largely unknown to the rest of us: the subject they adore—for those granted a look beneath its surface—is *beautiful.*

Its shapes and proportions inspire painters and musicians. Its mysteries can tantalize and confound even its own deepest theoreticians. And its demands for bold and insightful habits of thinking develop skills as useful to us in our everyday lives as they are to the most abstract philosophers.

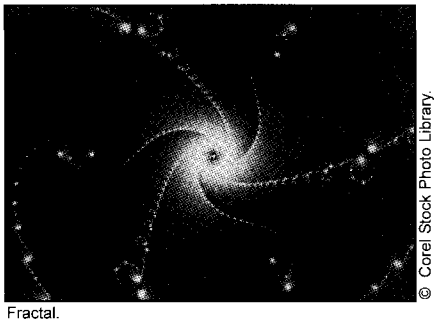
And now the highly effective strategies of thinking from this remarkable mathematical world are available to you in **The Joy of Thinking: The Beauty and Power of Classical Mathematical Ideas**, in 24 clear and entertaining video lectures.

Best of all, the lectures come to you from The Teaching Company, the renowned educational enterprise that makes America's most honored college professors available in brilliant recorded lectures you can enjoy again and again.

No Special Knowledge Required!

The Joy of Thinking requires no specialized or advanced knowledge of math, and is as appropriate for high school students as for adults. Designed both for those already fascinated with math and eager to learn more, and those merely curious about the subject, the lectures feature two of the most entertaining and honored teachers in mathematics today: Professor Edward B. Burger of Williams College and Professor Michael Starbird of The University of Texas at Austin.

With the help of hundreds of props, graphics, computer animations, and delightfully light-hearted problems (the reason this course is available only on videotape and DVD), they examine the ways in which mathematicians make sense of our world through numbers, geometry, and probability. And they'll leave you with a firm grasp of math's most fundamental ideas, lessons for living, and a new appreciation for the mathematics—in art, nature, and everyday life—that surround us.



© Corel Stock Photo Library.

Fractal.

About Our Sale Prices

Why is the sale price for this course so much lower than its regular price? Every course goes on sale at least once a year. Producing large quantities of only the sale courses keeps costs down and allows us to pass the savings on to you. Order before March 3, 2005 to receive these savings.

About The Teaching Company

We review hundreds of top-rated professors from America's best colleges and universities each year. From this extraordinary group, we choose only those rated highest by panels of our customers. Fewer than 10% of these world-class scholar-teachers are selected to make The Great Courses. We've been doing this since 1990, producing more than 2,000 hours of material in modern and ancient history, philosophy, literature, fine arts, the sciences, and mathematics for intelligent, engaged, adult lifelong learners. If a course is ever less than completely satisfying, you may exchange it for another or we will refund your money promptly.

Lecture Titles

Great Ideas that Bring Our World into Focus ... How Many? Counting Surprises ... Fermat's Last Theorem and the Allure of Number ... Pining for Nature's Numbers ... Sizing up the Fibonacci Numbers ... The Sexiest Rectangle ... The Hidden Beauty of the Golden Rectangle ... The Pythagorean Theorem and Geometry of Ellipses ... Not-so-Platonic Relationships in Platonic Solids ... Hunting for a Sixth Platonic Solid ... Is There a Fourth Dimension? Can We See It? ... The Invisible Art of the Fourth Dimension ... A Twisted Idea—The Möbius Band ... A One-Sided, Sealed Surface—The Klein Bottle ... Ordinary Origami—Creating Beautiful Patterns ... Unfolding Paper to Reveal a Fiery Fractal ... Fractals—Infinitely Complex Creations ... Fractal Frauds of Nature ... Chance Surprises—Measuring Uncertainty ... Door Number Two or Door Number Three? ... Great Expectations—Weighing the Uncertain Future ... Random Thoughts—Randomness in Our World ... How Surprising are Surprising Coincidences? ... Life Lessons Learned from Mathematical Thinking

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day
GREAT PROFESSORS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.

SAVE UP TO $185!
OFFER GOOD UNTIL MARCH 3, 2005

1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412)
Fax: 703-378-3819

Special offer is available online at
www.TEACH12.com/1com

THE Great Courses™
THE TEACHING COMPANY®
4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151-1232

Priority Code 17833

Please send me **The Joy of Thinking: The Beauty and Power of Classical Mathematical Ideas**, which consists of twenty-four 30-minute lectures (12 hours in all), with complete lecture outlines.

- ❑ **DVD $69.95** (reg. price $254.95) **SAVE $185!** plus $10 shipping, handling, and lifetime satisfaction guarantee.
- ❑ **Videotape $54.95** (reg. price $199.95) **SAVE $145!** plus $10 shipping, handling, and lifetime satisfaction guarantee.
- ❑ **Check or Money Order enclosed**

* Non-U.S. Orders: Additional shipping charges apply. Call or visit the FAQ page at our website for details.
**Virginia residents please add 5% sales tax.

Charge my credit card:

❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard ❑ DISCOVER NOVUS ❑ AMERICAN EXPRESS

ACCOUNT NUMBER EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE *(If we have questions regarding your order—required for international orders)*

❑ **FREE CATALOG.** Please send me a free copy of your current catalog (no purchase necessary).

Special offer is available online at www.TEACH12.com/1com
Offer Good Through: March 3, 2005

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to understand that the status quo best serves American interests. This means that Beijing should abstain from using force *and* Taiwan should refrain from attempting to separate permanently from the mainland. Poll after poll suggests that mainstream opinion in Taiwan agrees.

The most intelligent strategy that Washington can pursue is to suppress nationalistic moves on *both* sides. It would be unwise to endorse Taiwanese nationalism and inadvertently precipitate a showdown in the Taiwan Strait.

YU-SHAN WU
Academia Sinica
Taiwan

TO THE EDITOR:

Few would argue with Arthur Waldron's assertion that Washington should maintain a close relationship with Taipei. But one must not underestimate Taiwan's historical and cultural links to China, trivialize America's steadfast support for Taiwan to date, or misjudge Washington's need for a constructive relationship with Beijing.

The Manchu Qing dynasty's two centuries of influence in Taiwan, from 1687 until 1895, facilitated migration and the gradual spread of Chinese settlement on the island. The aboriginal inhabitants of Taiwan now constitute only 2 percent of its population. China lost Taiwan to the Empire of Japan in the first Sino-Japanese war, but following Japan's defeat by the Allies in World War II, the island was returned to the Republic of China (ROC). When China was split by civil war in 1949 and the People's Republic of China (PRC) occupied the mainland, the ROC government retreated to Taiwan. Thus, while the ROC's territory had changed, the state remained essentially intact. As one Taiwanese governmental study concluded, "that the ROC has been an independent sovereign state since its establishment in 1912 is an incontrovertible historical fact."

In 1987, Taipei lifted the ban on travel, trade, and investment with the PRC. Today, the Taiwanese have invested over $100 billion in the PRC, and several hundred thousand Taiwanese live on the mainland. Links between the two societies continue to grow. It is true that many ROC citizens now consider themselves exclusively "Taiwanese," but polls reveal that if China were to undertake political and economic reforms, support for unification would rise. If, on the other hand, China continues to engage in hostile behavior, it will succeed only in stirring up passions that could lead to a disastrous confrontation between the two sides.

One cannot overstate how strongly the Chinese people feel about Taiwan. They believe it to be, like Hong Kong, a Chinese territory that must be returned to the motherland. Moreover, China's leaders fear that Taiwan's independence would encourage other restive territories to push for separation. As the late General Chiang Wei-kuo, son of President Chiang Kai-shek, explained, "if Taiwan can be independent, Tibet can be independent, Xinjiang can be independent, Inner Mongolia can be independent—the whole country could fall apart." China will not tolerate the establishment of a new Republic of Taiwan.

For decades, the U.S. recognized the ROC as the legitimate government of all China. Due to a shift in global alignments, Washington broke diplomatic relations with Taipei and established relations with Beijing in 1979. But America's informal relations with Taiwan are stronger than ever. On April 25, 2001 President Bush even indicated that the U.S. had an obligation to defend Taiwan against attack by China. Contrary to what Mr. Waldron suggests, the U.S. is not pushing for unification. The Taiwan Relations Act and all of the U.S.-PRC communiqués state clearly that the U.S. favors a *peaceful resolution* of the Taiwan question. But, as one U.S. government study concluded, the U.S. "has not expressed any opinion on the form the ultimate resolution might take." Furthermore, in a condition introduced during the Clinton administration, U.S. policy now stresses that any resolution must be acceptable to the Taiwanese people.

Like its predecessors, the Bush administration realizes that it is in America's interest to maintain a strong, constructive relationship with Taiwan *and* China. There is more than trade at stake. Beijing's cooperation is essential if the international community hopes to address global problems like terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. To its credit, the Bush administration has somehow managed to upgrade relations with Taipei while simultaneously deepening the U.S. relationship with Beijing. Inviting the Taiwanese president to a dinner at the White House (something Mr. Waldron proposes) is not a way to achieve peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. To reach that goal, the U.S. must somehow convince the two sides to display more flexibility in their relations with each other and work together to resolve their differences peacefully.

DENNIS V. HICKEY
Southwest Missouri State University
Springfield, Missouri

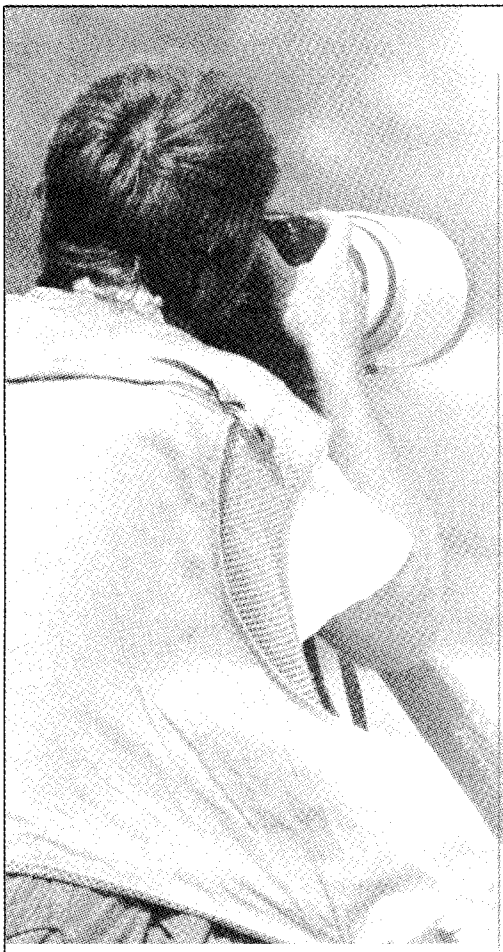
TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur Waldron is one of a handful of historians of Chinese geopolitics brave enough to confront the bad habits of Washington's China policy. His discussion of Henry Kissinger's overtures to China 35 years ago should stimulate readers to revisit how we became virtual allies with China in the first place, and what has changed since.

In his memoir, *White House Years*, Kissinger recounts his concern in 1969 that a Soviet preemptive nuclear strike on China —a real possibility then—would "upset the global balance of power; it would create around the world an impression of approaching Soviet dominance." A U.S.-China entente emerged, as Kissinger explains, because "history suggested that it was usually more advantageous to align oneself with the weaker of two antagonistic partners, because this acted as a restraint on the stronger."

The relationship incubated during the 1970's as both powers tacitly shared an interest in constraining the USSR. The normalization of relations in 1979 launched a decade of active intelligence and military cooperation against Soviet expansion. Not coincidentally, this new strategic partnership was accompanied by an unprecedented period of economic reform and political liberalization in China through the 1980's. Americans reasonably believed that China was evolving into a country that not only shared U.S. security in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Get the full picture! Join CAMERA

Leading the fight against anti-Israel media bias.

Combating bias in magazines, newspapers, TV, radio, books...

Smart, accurate, effective, vital.

CAMERA systematically monitors, documents and reviews reporting on the region and alerts media outlets to errors and omissions.

CAMERA's members receive publications on related issues and participate in efforts to advance sound coverage.

CAMERA also helps students counter distorted depictions of Israel in campus publications.

Join CAMERA and participate in this vital work.

Act today!

www.camera.org

P.O. Box 35040
Boston, MA 02135-0001
(617) 789-3672
Fax (617) 787-7853

CAMERA®

The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terests but potentially was open to our political values as well. This belief climaxed during the six weeks of pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989, but it was shattered on June 4 of that year by the government's brutal suppression of the democracy movement.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the basic organizing principle of the U.S.-China strategic partnership vanished. While the U.S. reaped a post-cold war "peace dividend" in reduced defense spending, China's military modernization went into overdrive. By 1996, a Chinese general had threatened Los Angeles with nuclear destruction should America aid Taiwan in a cross-strait conflict. But instead of rethinking the fundamentals of America's national interests, Washington's foreign-policy bureaucracy continued on autopilot. China was "big", Taiwan was "small"; ergo, China was "important" and Taiwan was not.

Mr. Waldron rightly asks why American policy-makers discount our stake in Taiwan. It has the world's seventeenth-largest economy (on a par with Russia's) and is America's tenth-largest export market. It has East Asia's fifth-largest military and Asia's second-largest merchant-marine fleet (after China's). It has nearly twice the population of Australia. It has been one of America's staunchest allies and is perennially a top customer for U.S. defense equipment. With the Pentagon's recent approval of long-range radar systems for Taiwan's army, the island could be a vital link in America's global missile-defense architecture.

Instead of "China big, Taiwan small," the guiding principle of America's strategy should be that "Taiwan is a democracy, China is not." Any halfway intelligent China-Taiwan calculus would also ask where U.S. interests in the Pacific lie. In a China that has successfully cowed Taiwan into submission, or in a Taiwan that can successfully resist *Anschluss* with China?

Arthur Waldron deserves our thanks for putting these questions into strategic and historical perspective.

JOHN TKACIK
Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

ARTHUR WALDRON writes:

Discussion of the Taiwan-China relationship has become so clouded over the past thirty years, including by vast quantities of doubletalk from Washington and Beijing, that in preparing my article I felt my first duty was simply to tell the truth as well as I could. Three commonplace opinions struck me as being factually unsustainable.

The first unsustainable opinion was that the American policy of cutting all diplomatic and military relations with Taiwan, carried out by President Carter in 1979, had been a success. It most certainly was not that, not even in its own terms. Carter sought to deliver a fatal blow to the island, expecting that, after a decent interval, its dictatorial government, dominated by Chinese, would reach over the heads of its disenfranchised people to embrace "peaceful reunification"—and thus eliminate the troublesome issue from Washington-Beijing relations. Wherever else the Carter administration's ill-thought-out policy may have led, it did not lead to this objective, and thus must be said to have failed.

Second, the Carter policy is *never* going to lead to its objective. The people of now democratic Taiwan seem most unlikely to vote to join the People's Republic of China in any sort of genuinely free democratic procedure. All parties understand this fact: hence China's immense military build-up against Taiwan and regular threats to use force.

But, third, China's repeated threats to use force, while dangerous and necessary to counter, are also not persuasive. With China's economy utterly dependent upon American markets, which would be closed in event of conflict, and with any such war certain to be costly, highly destructive, and most likely inconclusive, and with the Olympics looming, Beijing will likely find reasons to postpone.

So the 1970's scenario by which the two sides reach a mutually acceptable settlement through negotiation is dead. It is simply not going to happen, probably not even if China should become a fully constitutional, free, and democratic state.

What is worse, in the 1970's the United States burned nearly every bridge that might have led to other outcomes. We retained *no* official diplomatic presence in Taipei. By failing to insist on continuing representation for Taiwan in the United Nations, we provided crucial help to Beijing in ostracizing the island from the international community. Worst of all, perhaps, the Nixon administration agreed more than three decades ago that the U.S. would not support "two Chinas; one China, one Taiwan; or an independent Taiwan"—thus effectively ruling out all possible solutions save integration with China.

The result was to confront Taiwan with a future, written by others, that offered its people no democratically acceptable option. This started a search for exits that polarized politics in the island, destabilizing the situation in the Taiwan Strait and potentially in Asia more widely. Oddly, we have blamed the Taiwanese for this, when of course it was our policy change (of which they were informed without warning by a phone call in the small hours) that threw things into disarray.

Such, I think, are the facts. Certainly none of my correspondents challenges this basic narrative. Rather, they are concerned with what to do now.

I owe Yu-shan Wu an apology if I have conveyed the impression that I do not appreciate the "Chinese" aspects of Taiwan. Far from it. I began my study of Chinese there more than 30 years ago and now, as a professor, I cannot but be aware of the superb quality of Sinological and other research being produced by his Academia Sinica. My own university has recently hired a Taiwan University graduate to teach Chinese history. China certainly has many brilliant and creative scholars, but the knowledge loss owing to Mao's Cultural Revolution and the continuing close political control of education have taken their toll. Following on this, I am of course well aware of the deep feeling of many in Taiwan that they are "Chinese," though not subjects of Beijing.

A word about Mr. Wu's generous observation that "U.S. support has been the single most important factor in Taiwan's stance against

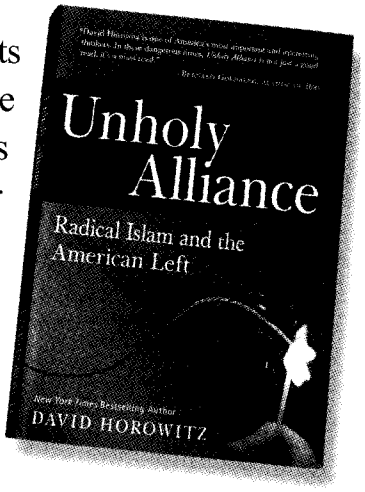
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISRAEL IS THE CANARY IN THE MINE

The war between Arabs and Jews is not the cause of the war on terror, as apologists for Muslim radicals claim; it *is* the war on terror.

Twenty-five years ago, there were two non-Islamic democracies in the Arab Middle East, Israel and Lebanon. This was too much for Islamic radicals and Syrian irredentists and Palestinians who joined forces to destroy Lebanon and make it a base for terror.

The goal of the post-Oslo Intifada is not to establish a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish state. Its goal is an Islamic *umma* extending "from the Jordan to the sea." That is why Oslo was rejected by Arafat even though Barak and Clinton offered him an independent state on virtually all of the land Palestinians claimed in the West Bank of the Jordan. That is why the very birth of Israel is referred to by all the present Palestinian leadership as the "Naqba" – the "catastrophe." To Islamic radicals at war with the West, the very creation of Israel is a catastrophe.



American apologists for Arab aggression are also apologists for Islamic aggression. In their eyes, Arab terror in the Middle East has a root cause in the policies of Israel, whom terrorists refer to as the "little Satan." For apologists of the Islamic terror of 9/11 and the Zarqawi terror in Iraq, *jihad* is not a self-generating creed but has a "root cause" in the policies of "the Great Satan," which is us.

Peace in the Middle East and peace in the war with al-Qaeda and Zarqawi will come only when the terrorists surrender or are defeated.

~ David Horowitz

"THE INTERESTS OF MUSLIMS AND THE INTERESTS OF THE SOCIALISTS COINCIDE IN THE WAR AGAINST THE CRUSADERS."

~ Osama Bin Laden, February 14, 2003.

30% off if ordered from Frontpagemag.com

WWW.FRONTPAGEMAG.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pressure from China": this is certainly true, but it was not what Kissinger, Nixon, or Carter hoped for. Rather, it is due to the cunning of history. Soon after President Carter signed what he thought was Taiwan's death warrant, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, which, manifesting the strong views of the American people, guaranteed a far more robust degree of support than the then President wanted. That legislation, not the Carter policy, is what (along with Taipei's decision to democratize) saved the island.

As for the present moment, I agree with Mr. Wu that the wisest approach is to focus on tasks like perfecting the island's democracy and judiciary, eliminating criminal activities in government, improving infrastructure, education, defense, and so forth, until the point where a consensus is reached in Taiwan. Washington might then be persuaded to signal, privately at first, that the 1970's attempt to do away with Taiwan has failed and that a new approach is required, while China might be simultaneously persuaded to give up its expectation that Washington will somehow force Taiwan to terms and instead begin to talk seriously to the elected government in Taipei. I made these points forcefully in an address late last year to the World Taiwanese Congress, a largely pro-independence organization, meeting in Washington. The full text can be found at www.strategycenter.net.

I have one caveat, however, aimed more at Washington and Beijing than at the people of Taiwan. This is that the processes of history cannot be stopped, and maintaining the status quo can be at best a transitional phase. Taiwan is a dynamic society that will not tolerate limbo forever, and so is China. Instead of attempting the impossible, which is to stop change on both sides of the strait, we should be looking for a genuine solution that will restore to Taiwan much of what was so unwisely stripped away in the 1970's. It is a state and a power and a player. Some in America argue that our Taiwan policy is based on "necessary myths." How about instead a diplomacy based on confronting reality?

Dennis V. Hickey is one of our country's genuine authorities on this topic, and I agree broadly with his well-informed comments, but with some reservations.

First, the United States, which became, in effect, the fiduciary responsible for Taiwan by virtue of Japan's defeat and loss of its erstwhile colony, has never recognized Chinese sovereignty over the island. Our position, made clear both in Kissinger's secret conversations with Zhou Enlai and President Reagan's "six assurances" in 1982, is that the sovereignty of the island under international law remains to be determined. Thus, we recognized Chiang Kai-shek's government as having administrative control but not sovereignty, and the same is true for the democratically elected government of Chen Shuibian today, as Secretary of State Colin Powell recently made clear. In the 1970's we thought the question of sovereignty would become moot when Taiwan joined China. In other cases, such as East Timor or Ukraine, plebiscites are the standard under international law. For now, China simply will not accept this.

Second, I wonder whether it really is impossible to "overstate how strongly the Chinese people feel about Taiwan." Last August, when I visited China as part of a semi-official delegation, I was lectured in Beijing by two very high-ranking officials on just this point—which prompted me to ask for polling data to support the contention. My Chinese interlocutors could produce none, and urged me simply to go out and "talk to people." I pointed out that to do so would be illegal, for Chinese law forbids any opinion-polling on the Taiwan question specifically. In the absence of free debate and accurate opinion surveys, we have no way of knowing what the Chinese people, as opposed to their rulers, think.

I do not believe the current hard line would survive a genuine democratic transition. We got those lectures only in Beijing—where one high official had to be reminded to say her bit after she thought she had finished. In Shanghai, official comments were quite different, while in other cities Taiwan was not even mentioned.

Finally, the remark by Chiang Wei-kuo, the less gifted of Chiang Kai-shek's two sons, is true: "If Taiwan can be independent, Tibet can be independent, Xinjiang can be independent, Inner Mongolia can be independent—the whole country could fall apart." It is not only true, but likely. Beijing today claims not the territory of the indubitably Chinese Ming dynasty but rather the empire—including Tibet, Xinjiang, and so forth—that was assembled by the non-Chinese Manchus, and of which China itself was a component part. I see no way of keeping this archaic structure together while modernizing and liberalizing at the same time. China has already let go of Mongolia: why not begin the inevitable process of devolution now?

I can only thank John Tkacik, one of the tiny handful of Americans who really know Taiwan, for his kind remarks and useful additions to what I wrote. Our interest in Asia lies in an entente of democracies able to balance China so long as it remains a dictatorship and military threat, and also to serve as an example of how it might move forward.

Just such an entente would appear to be developing. The overseas Chinese press noted in November that a Chinese nuclear submarine, whose cruise through Japanese territorial waters has no doubt provoked a thorough reexamination of Tokyo's security policy, was spotted first by a U.S. satellite and then by a Taiwan patrol aircraft, with both countries immediately informing Japan. Through such cooperation, peace and security in Asia will be assured, and pressure brought on China to change. Perhaps this is the insight from which Washington's necessary new China-Taiwan policy can take its cue.

Chomsky

TO THE EDITOR:

Having been morbidly fascinated with Noam Chomsky for decades and having written about him on several occasions, (and even engaged in some private correspondence with him),

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I appreciate Arch Puddington's assessment of his newfound popularity ["Chomsky's Universe," October 2004]. But there remain puzzling aspects of Chomsky's beliefs and influence that need to be addressed, especially given his highly unoriginal and endlessly repeated views.

What sets Chomsky apart from other critics of the United States and Israel? How to explain his global appeal? How can he persist so tirelessly in his monomaniacal denunciations?

I suggest that it is the combination of his impregnable self-righteousness with the purity and intensity of his hatreds that makes Chomsky irresistible to all those who are similarly disposed but incapable of articulating corresponding sentiments. The truly extreme and unrestrained character of his pronouncements is what gives the greatest pleasure to his audiences.

Chomsky's appeal is also likely to be related to the manner of his delivery: he conveys his outlandish statements casually and matter-of-factly, as if they were indisputable verities that only the most obtuse could fail to grasp. Characteristically, he immerses his vitriolic denunciations in a rationalistic or quasi-rational polemical style, larded with expressions such as "it is surely not in doubt," "assuming that facts matter," "evidence from sources that seem to deserve a hearing," "the available facts lead to one clear conclusion," "informed opinion ranges over quite a wide spectrum" (the latter referring to the massacres of Pol Pot). Authors he disagrees with are "observers of evident bias and low credibility."

The deepest mystery remains the source of Chomsky's consuming, lifelong hatred. It has yet to be thoroughly examined by qualified students of the human mind and psyche.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Northampton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Arch Puddington suggests some slight distinction between Noam Chomsky's defamations of America and of its Jews. In fact, in the depths of Chomsky's febrile brain, there is no real distinction between the two. Take, for example, the following observation in his address of October 11, 2002 to the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign: "Anti-Semitism [in the U.S.] is no longer a problem, fortunately. It's raised, but it's raised because privileged people want to make sure they have total control, not just 98 percent control. That's why anti-Semitism is becoming an issue." This is meat and drink for the tenured tigers in American universities and for witless Europeans who not only resent America but deeply regret that the Holocaust gave anti-Semitism a bad name.

EDWARD ALEXANDER
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR:

Many years ago, Noam Chomsky wrote an attack on Sidney Hook that opened by declaring, "As usual, Professor Hook begins with a lie." I turned to the beginnings of several books by Hook and found no lies, never mind "usual" ones. Chomsky cited not one book by Hook.

GREG LANNING
Abbotsford, British Columbia

TO THE EDITOR:

If Noam Chomsky lived under the political systems he admires—Castro's Cuba, Stalin's Russia, Mao's China—he would be executed for his opposition. Our open society allows him to live and flourish.

Why would Chomsky and others like him have such violently anti-American views? Perhaps to make money and receive honors, which the capitalism they despise allows them to do. If they extolled America, they would be ignored.

DENNIS C. BARRY
Pasadena, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Arch Puddington's onslaught takes Chomsky's politics far more seriously than Chomsky himself does. Chomsky's opinion is that all genuine human thinking is scientific. For him, there are no other modes or styles of rational inquiry. He accepts the consequence that his political polemics must therefore be accounted solipsistic: "My political views are my own," which "is not to say that questions about community, culture, and language are unimportant. They are extremely important. . . . [I]t is just that we have little scientific understanding of them."

It is a nicer question why, in that case, Chomsky's political pronouncements are of any interest to Chomsky himself. But the last thing he claims is the intellectual rigor for which Arch Puddington reports Chomsky's political writings are renowned among his followers.

Although in my view Chomsky is profoundly wrong about the nature of human thinking, I do not see why we should not take him at his word and refrain from treating his politicking with a seriousness he cannot himself grant to it.

IAN ROBINSON
Herefordshire, England

TO THE EDITOR:

Where does one begin? Arch Puddington's article is the worst pack of lies that I have ever encountered by so-called critics of Noam Chomsky. How you can justify publishing outright slander is beyond me.

ANDREW COUSINS
Peterborough, Ontario

ARCH PUDDINGTON writes:

I have no definitive answer to Paul Hollander's question about the source of Chomsky's appeal. Perhaps part of the answer lies in Chomsky's ability to remain "on message"—the message, of course, being that the United States is the source of all evil in the world. This is not the main theme of Chomsky's political writings; it is the only theme. And it is a theme ideally suited to the global Left in the post-Soviet era, when anti-Americanism has replaced socialism as the reigning idea of progressive thought. The fact that Chomsky avoids Marxist categories or vocabulary in his writings has also enabled him to reach a broader audience than more orthodox radicals. That Chomsky seems not to care whether his ideas are taken seriously by the press or policy-makers enhances his appeal to his core supporters.

I must respectfully disagree with Ian Robinson regarding Chomsky's attitude toward his own writings. Chomsky has been writing political polemics for the past forty years. He obviously takes his opinions and his writings with the utmost seriousness, as he does his role as the intellectual leader

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the anti-globalist movement.

Art Criticism

TO THE EDITOR:

Roger Kimball's *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art*, reviewed by Steven C. Munson [Books in Review, October 2004], attacks me at length for a book I published twenty years ago in which I put forward the remarkable thesis that the Victorians were sexually repressed and that one of them, the painter John Singer Sargent, made a series of apparently "Freudian slips" in his group portrait of the daughters of a fellow artist. In eighteen pages of *ad hominem* assault, Kimball mentions me by name no fewer than 70 times. Yet Mr. Munson, in his review, refers to me as David "Rubin" instead of Lubin. Could this too have been a slip, perhaps revealing something about Mr. Munson?

Mr. Munson, it appears, has read none of my work apart from the polemically chosen quotations in the book under review. He seems not even to realize that my rumination on Sargent appeared in a 1985 publication that has long been out of print, and thus is not exactly representative of current endeavors in art history, as Kimball's book misleadingly maintains.

Mr. Munson concludes his review by suggesting that today's revisionist art historians are worse than Nazis: "the current revisionism is more insidious, since it is not enforced or sponsored by state power but is rather the result of a voluntary exercise of academic freedom." Does he really stand behind the claim that academic freedom, one of the hallmarks of democracy, is more insidious than scholarship restricted under totalitarianism?

DAVID M. LUBIN
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

An exposé of what has been passing for art history in recent times is certainly worthwhile, but it is not something that just anyone can undertake. At the very least, the author should be able to distinguish between a Marxist hack like Albert Boime and a genuinely original scholar like Michael Fried.

Fried's purpose in *Courbet's Realism* was to explicate Courbet's greatness. In the section of Fried's book used by Roger Kimball, and discussed in Steven C. Munson's review, Fried was trying to rescue Courbet from the dull-witted sledgehammer tactics of the very ideologues whom Kimball attacks in *The Rape of the Masters*. Fried conceded that a feminist perspective might indeed shed some light on the history of art. But with regard to Courbet, he argued, it had brought nothing but jargon to the table. His point was that the usual fuming about the "masculine gaze" and "women as objects of masculine sexual possession" did violence to the complexity, many-layeredness, and "strangeness" of Courbet's genius.

Mr. Munson's review makes it clear that he too probably thinks Kimball a little too simpleminded for the job at hand. This makes me wonder even more whether Mr. Munson has actually read *Courbet's Realism*.

PHILIP LEIDER
New York City

STEVEN C. MUNSON writes:

Whether the misspelling of David M. Lubin's name was the result of failing eyesight or careless typing, I hope he will accept my apology. His justified anger at the mistake is a reminder that the man who said, "I don't care what you print about me as long as you spell my name right," was making an important point.

As for Mr. Lubin's other points: first, the fact that what he wrote twenty years ago has now apparently come back to haunt him is nothing to be ashamed of. Who among those of us who write for publication has not wished, upon reflection in the fullness of time, that he had said something better, or differently, or not at all? Unfortunately, with writing—as opposed to, say, certain types of felony—there is no statute of limitations. What Mr. Lubin wrote two decades ago "still counts"—unless he has decided to disavow it, but I see no sign of that. And if Roger Kimball has not misquoted him or taken what he wrote out of context—and Mr. Lubin offers no evidence to indicate that this is the case, either—he has no legitimate grounds for complaint.

Second, the word "insidious" means subtle, and in the context in which I used it I think it is exactly right. The effort to impose a politically correct ideology in an environment of academic freedom is by its very nature a far more subtle enterprise than straightforward state censorship. For Mr. Lubin to conclude from this that I think today's PC art historians are "worse than Nazis" is both silly and obtuse.

Like Mr. Lubin, Philip Leider offers no evidence to show that the quotations in Roger Kimball's book, in this case pertaining to Michael Fried, are inaccurate or have been removed from their proper context. Moreover, Mr. Leider's contention that, "with regard to Courbet," Fried argued that "a feminist perspective" had "brought nothing but jargon to the table" makes me wonder how closely he has read Fried's book.

Let me quote again what Fried had to say about Courbet's painting, *Young Women on the Banks of the Seine*:

> My argument can be summed up by saying that in the *Young Women*, what appears at first to be simply or exclusively a strongly oppositional thematics of sexual difference (the women as objects of masculine sexual possession) gives way to or at the very least coexists with a more embracing metaphorics of gender (a pervasive feminization of the pictorial field through an imagery of flowers). . . .

If that is not jargon, and feminist-inspired doubletalk to boot, I don't know what is. Nor is it the only example cited in Roger Kimball's *The Rape of the Masters*. As Kimball writes, Fried's "discussion is full of meditations on 'the metaphorics of phallicism, menstrual bleeding, pregnancy, and flowers,'" including the statement that the scattering of grain in Courbet's painting *The Wheat Sifters* "'can also be seen as a downpour of menstrual blood—not red but warm-hued and sticky-seeming, flooding outward from the sifter's rose-draped thighs.'"

How such positively gross meanderings could be part of an effort to "explicate Courbet's greatness," or even his realism, frankly eludes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me. Mr. Leider may see a qualitative intellectual difference between Fried's writings and those of "a Marxist hack like Albert Boime," but, on the basis of what I have read, I'm afraid I do not.

And this of course is the main point of Kimball's book: that what now passes for art scholarship is often little more than politically colored personal weirdness decked out in suitably esoteric academic terminology.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Leider's assertion that Michael Fried "was trying to rescue" Courbet from his more heavyhanded colleagues actually confirms one of the main points of my review: namely, that the revisionist art historians, animated by an ideological imperative (whether acknowledged or not) to discredit traditional and sensible ways of understanding the cultural products of the West, often end up shying away from the ultimate logic of their analysis and seeking to save their subjects from the depredations they have just visited on them. Whether this occurs within the boundaries of a single author's essay or book, or whether it is the result of intramural critique, is beside the point. In both cases, the intellectual process—a highly questionable one, in my view—is essentially the same.

Finally, whatever disagreements I might have with Roger Kimball, there is no doubt that he is a gifted, indeed indispensable, critic, editor, and polemicist, and, as I said in my review, his book deserves the widest audience possible.

"Perfection"

To the Editor:

I have just read the last sentences of "Perfection" [October 2004] and am rushing to congratulate you for publishing it and thus enabling me to read this wildly funny and heartbreaking fantasy. The story's amazing originality can be matched only by Mark Helprin's extreme courage in approaching the unanswerable question raised by the Holocaust, and doing so through the mind of a survivor of Majdanek who, at thirteen, in Yankee Stadium with a baseball bat in his weak child's hands, proves to himself and to—to whom, really?—that "*tsadik Adonai bekhol derakhav*," the Lord is righteous in all His ways; in other words, there is perfection. As a fantastic treatment of that unsolvable riddle, it is one of the most original stories on the inner workings of a haunted survivor I have ever read. Thank you.

HANOCH BARTOV
Ramat Aviv, Israel

To the Editor:

Mark Helprin, with all his hyperbolic force of hilarious metaphor, has made us see, through his concoction named Roger, who we are as people in protest against death, in the everlasting praise of His name and the love of that name in its absolute facelessness. Thank you for its publication.

WILLIAM PROWELLER
Dunkirk, New York

To the Editor:

A short comment on Mark Helprin's story, "Perfection," in COMMENTARY: story perfection in COMMENTARY.

GERALD FULLER
Alexandria, Kentucky

To the Editor:

Thank you, Mr. Helprin, for a delightfully wise story.

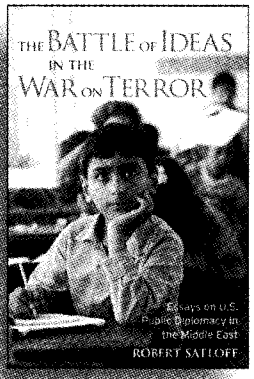
MARY JO AND JIM READING
Grants, New Mexico

To the Editor:

I am a long-time reader of COMMENTARY, and a passionate fan, but what were you thinking? Mark Helprin's story was pompous, bloated, incoherent, and embarrassing. Please use better judgment.

JOHN DESOLA
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE BATTLE OF IDEAS IN THE WAR ON TERROR
Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East

By Robert Satloff

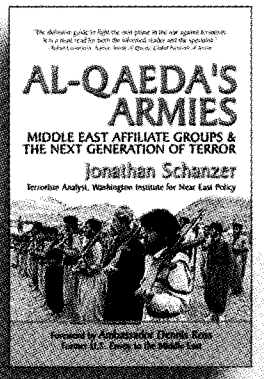
This collection of essays offers a bold, hopeful, and unapologetic vision for U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East, recommending how—and how not—to wage a campaign for the "hearts and minds" of Arabs and Muslims.

ISBN 0-944029-92-2
106 pp., $19.95

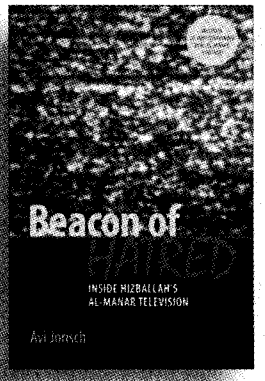
AL-QAEDA'S ARMIES
Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror

By Jonathan Schanzer

Detailing the ties of individual affiliates to Osama bin Laden's network of terror, this essential study examines the history and ideology of groups that hold current and future significance for the West. *Published with SPI Books.*



ISBN 1-56171-884-X
222 pp. including index,
$16.95



BEACON OF HATRED
Inside Hizballah's Al-Manar Television

By Avi Jorisch

This groundbreaking study explores Hizballah's official television mouthpiece, al-Manar, and offers an in-depth content analysis of its programming. Draws on extensive research, including interviews with Hizballah officials.

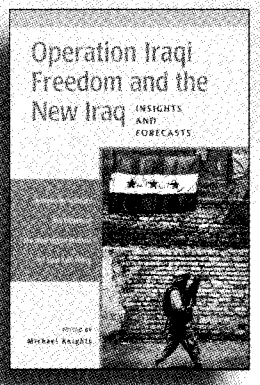
Contains CD-ROM featuring real al-Manar footage.

ISBN 0-944029-88-4
106 pp. with CD-ROM,
$24.95

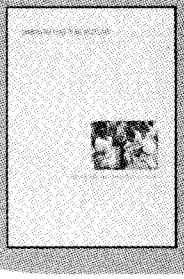
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND THE NEW IRAQ
Insights and Forecasts

Edited By Michael Knights

An anthology of wartime insights into the critical months preceding the handover of sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government—a period that may determine both the future of Iraq and America's role in the wider Middle East for years to come.



ISBN 0-944029-93-0
375 pp. including index,
$19.95



WINNING THE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A Bipartisan Blueprint for Postwar U.S. Policy

Endorsed by:
Lawrence Eagleburger • Newt Gingrich • Alexander Haig • Robert Kerrey • William Perry • Fred Thompson • R. James Woolsey

Request a free copy with the purchase of any Washington Institute publication.

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

To order, please call 1-800-275-1447 • www.washingtoninstitute.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary
January 2005

Why the Democrats Keep Losing

Joshua Muravchik

THE AFTERMATH befitted the morrow of a civil war. Tens of thousands of Americans visited the website of the Canadian immigration service to learn how they could take themselves into exile. A Florida psychotherapist reported treating more than a dozen people for sudden depression. "Hard times, brutish times, lie ahead," intoned the *New Republic*.

The *New York Times* turned its op-ed page into a kind of wailing wall, where a procession of mourners poured forth their laments and imprecations. Garry Wills: "We now resemble [Europe] less than we do our putative enemies . . . al Qaeda [and] Saddam Hussein's Sunni loyalists." Thomas Friedman: The Bush people "have used . . . religious energy to promote divisions and intolerance at home and abroad." Maureen Dowd: "jihad in America. . . . One party controls all power. . . . One nation dominates the world."

The proverbial visitor from afar might have been astonished to learn that all of this rhetorical tearing of hair and rending of garments was occasioned by nothing more than the results of a presidential election, and not even the wailers themselves could have doubted that this election would be followed by another four years hence. Clearly something else was going on.

To be sure, George W. Bush was hated. He had been the object of a startling amount of contumely during his first term of office, a phenomenon that had already occasioned much comment in the public prints. Some of this strong sentiment was presumably due to the taint of illegitimacy that had attached to his victory in the 2000 election. Leaving aside the contested, court-ordered outcome of the vote-counting in Florida, Bush had received fewer votes nationally than his opponent and had acceded to the presidency thanks only to an anachronism in our political system. Although this had happened twice before in our history, the last time was in the 19th century, and to many it appeared excruciatingly unfair, not to mention undemocratic.

But in November 2004, the fact that Bush's second term would now be legitimate beyond any doubt seemed only to compound the hatred. Several of the President's detractors hastened to suggest that his relatively narrow margin of victory—amounting to 3 percent of the popular vote—should not be taken as a "mandate." Whether they would have said the same had Bush's Democratic opponent won by a like amount is doubtful.

The *New York Times*, for example, has regularly questioned the presence of a mandate in recent elec-

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His analyses of previous presidential elections—"The New Politics & the Democrats" (with Penn Kemble, December 1972), "Why the Democrats Lost" (January 1985), "Why the Democrats Lost Again" (February 1989), "Why the Democrats Finally Won" (January 1993), and "Why the Republicans Lost, and Won" (January 1997)—are available at* COMMENTARY*'s website, www.commentarymagazine.com.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions—but only when the winner has been a Republican. In 1980, when Ronald Reagan bested incumbent President Jimmy Carter by 10 percentage points, the paper's editors observed that his "mandate," a word they themselves put in suspicion-arousing quotation marks, had "little policy content," a position they reiterated four years later when Reagan won reelection over Walter Mondale by a whopping 18 percentage points (a "lonely landslide" and "a personal victory with little precise policy mandate"). Nor could the 8-point victory by Bush's father over Michael Dukakis "fairly be called a mandate," asserted the paper in 1988.

Whenever a Democrat has won, by contrast, the *Times* has perceived things differently. After Bill Clinton's first victory (by 6 percentage points) in 1992, the editors commented: "The test now will be how quickly President-elect Clinton can convert his mandate into momentum." When he won reelection (by 8 points) in 1996, it repeated the thought—"There can be no question about his mandate"—and added a little civics lesson: "The American people express their clearest opinion about what they want government to do through their choice of chief executive."

II

EVEN AS the Democrats and their friends in the mainstream media minimized the import of Bush's victory in 2004, it seems likely that their pained response was due precisely to the fact that the Republican victory, if not deep, was undeniably broad. In addition to winning the presidency with an absolute majority of the popular vote (something no Democrat has achieved since Lyndon Johnson in 1964), the Republicans solidified their majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives. This will be the sixth successive Congress since 1994 in which the Republicans will have controlled both houses.

Nor is the pattern likely to be broken in the short term. Republicans now hold a 30-vote margin in the House; since the advantage of incumbency usually results in to the victory of more than 90 percent of those standing for reelection, this will not be easy to reverse. In the Senate, the Republicans hold a ten-vote edge. There, reelection is a less sure thing, but in the midterm election of 2006 more incumbent Democrats are thought to be at risk than Republicans. Meanwhile, the GOP continues to enjoy a lead of 29 to 21 in governorships, including those of the four most populous states: California, Texas, New York, and Florida.

As if all this were not unnerving enough, the Republicans won in a year when many things had seemed promising for Democrats. The war in Iraq was proving to be much tougher sledding than originally hoped, and throughout the year Bush was buffeted by unfavorable headlines—a mounting insurgency, intelligence failures about weapons of mass destruction, prisoner abuse, the withdrawal of allies, and more. Although it is supposedly difficult to oust a sitting President in wartime, both Johnson and Harry S. Truman, two incumbents saddled with wars on distant shores that were not going well, declined to seek reelection, presumably in part out of fear they would not win. Nor was the news from the home front particularly good for Bush. The economy was recovering from recession, but the rebound was weak, generating few jobs and no more than guarded optimism.

Adding to the pre-election expectations—and post-election frustrations—of Democrats and liberals was their low regard for the man who beat them. Howell Raines, the former executive editor of the *Times*, had captured this sentiment in a pre-election essay: "There are signs of the fierce conviction of some voters—and the secret fear of a quieter and perhaps larger group—that George W. Bush is not smart enough to continue as President." One of these voters apparently was John F. Kerry, who vented to an aide within earshot of an "embedded" *Newsweek* correspondent: "I can't believe I'm losing to this idiot." By contrast, most Democrats felt, with reason, that unlike Mondale or Dukakis or Al Gore before him, Kerry had proved to be an effective, if uncharismatic, campaigner.

Other political factors appeared to be breaking in favor of the Democrats as well. Only two weeks before the election, these were summed up by the Democratic strategist James Carville:

> If we can't win this damn election, with a Democratic party more unified than ever before, with us having raised as much money as the Republicans, with 55 percent of the country believing [the U.S. is] heading in the wrong direction, with our candidate having won all three debates, and with our side being more passionate about the outcome than theirs—if we can't win this one, then we can't win [anything]!

III

CARVILLE'S ENUMERATION of Democratic advantages left out an important one—the palpable tilt toward Kerry on the part of the mainstream

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

press. In October, the political director of ABC News—inspired, he said, by the *New York Times*—sent a memo to the network staff exhorting them *not* to be strictly evenhanded with respect to the two campaigns:

> We have a responsibility to hold both sides accountable to the public interest, but that doesn't mean we reflexively and artificially hold both sides "equally" accountable when the facts don't warrant that.
>
> I'm sure many of you have this week felt the stepped-up Bush efforts to complain about our coverage. This is all part of their efforts to get away with as much as possible with the stepped-up, renewed efforts to win the election by destroying Senator Kerry at least partly through distortions.
>
> It's up to Kerry to defend himself, of course. But as one of the few news organizations with the skill and strength to help voters evaluate what the candidates are saying [we have a duty] to serve the public interest. Now is the time for all of us to step up and do that right.

Around the dial from ABC at CBS, an edition of the magazine show *60 Minutes*, presented by star anchor Dan Rather, revealed hitherto secret documents showing that Bush had been truant from his National Guard duties as a young man and had benefited from favoritism. Within a couple of days, most news organizations, goaded by alert bloggers, recognized that these were clumsy forgeries; they turned out to have been furnished to the network by a well-known Bush-hating crank. Although CBS and Rather belatedly and grudgingly acknowledged their error, the network was not done. Eager for a second bite at the apple of electoral influence, *60 Minutes* planned a bombshell for the Sunday night before election Tuesday, a slot that would leave no time for the facts to catch up with a dubious story.

This time, the network was going to expose the ultimate example of dereliction in handling the occupation of Iraq, namely, that the administration had allowed 377 tons of extremely high explosives, useful for detonating a nuclear bomb, to disappear. In the event, however, the *New York Times* scooped CBS, running the story on its front page a week earlier. Subsequent polls showed that this story did swing some votes to Kerry, but not as many as it might have done had there been less time to rebut it.*

This was but one of several stories in which the *Times* revealed its slant on the election. The paper's "public editor," Daniel Okrent, denied any such bias; he published two counterbalanced critiques of the paper, one complaining that it favored Kerry, the other that it favored Bush. To make the latter case, Okrent found Todd Gitlin, an unreconstructed leftist and former head of the 1960's radical group, Students for a Democratic Society.

Gitlin's argument was absurd, as was the equation of critics from the Left and the Right. The *Times* fervently backed Kerry in its editorials, and almost all of the paper's correspondents are Democrats. A clearer reflection of the paper's attitude could be seen in an op-ed by Howell Raines, whose imprint was still evident even after his 2003 departure as executive editor. "If George Bush wins the presidential election," wrote Raines in the *St. Petersburg Times*, "Americans can mark it down as a triumph of thug politics."

In a similar vein, *Newsweek* "reported" after the election that the outcome had validated Karl Rove's strategy "even if it turns [the] country into a battle zone, and validates smash-mouth politics for a generation." And the *Washington Post* columnist E. J. Dionne asserted: "The fervent opposition to President Bush is rational, and its intensity is a direct response to Bush's own efforts to discredit all opposition to his policies." But these indignant comments on Bush's tactics only revealed partisan blinders, for exit polling showed that a plurality of voters believed it was Kerry, not Bush, who had attacked his opponent unfairly.

Nor is the evidence of media bias only impressionistic. A study of coverage during two weeks in October by the non-partisan Project for Excellence in Journalism found (according to a report in the trade journal *Editor & Publisher*) that "59 percent of stories that were mainly about Bush told a mainly negative story, while 25 percent of Kerry stories played out that way. One in three stories about Kerry were positive, one in seven for Bush."

IV

AFTER THE vote, the *Times* reported that some Democrats felt their loss "presaged a period of Republican domination." As Donald Fowler, a former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, put it, "I think we have come to an ending point

* What the rebuttals showed was that, contrary to the *Times*'s assertion that the explosives were "supposed to be under American control," they had been unwatched and might have disappeared during the weeks immediately *preceding* the arrival of American forces. Since a stockpile of this size amounted to scores of truckloads, it is hard to imagine that looters or even small terrorist bands could have moved it all. A much more plausible explanation was that it formed a part of the cache of material that Saddam Hussein's regime was known to have moved—some of it into Syria—in the weeks before its demise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a long transition that began in 1968. . . . I think we live in a country that is majority Republican now." According to this view, the *Times* reported, "the present national divide, between the narrow but solid Republican majority and a Democratic party seemingly trapped in second place, may be hardening into a pattern that will persist for years to come."

Is this true? Not according to polls, or at least not yet. In the main exit poll sponsored by a consortium of news organizations, each of the major parties was named by 37 percent of the voters, leaving a sizable swing group.* This did reflect a trend toward the Republicans, who previously had trailed the Democrats, but scarcely dominance.

Still, there is evidence that the momentum lies with the GOP. The long-term population trend in the U.S. shows an outward flow from the "blue" states to the "red" states of the South and West, and with that flow go seats in Congress and the Electoral College. At the two parties' 2004 national conventions, 14 percent of Democratic delegates told surveyors they had once been Republicans; 28 percent, or double that proportion, of Republican delegates had once been Democrats. In other words, a substantial slice of the Republican leadership consists of converts, reinforcing the impression of a trend. Moreover, whereas Democrats had once been the party of grass-roots activists, several news organizations reported that the party was now paying its canvassers; for their own get-out-the-vote operation, the Republicans were able to rely on volunteers.

That the Democrats *could* pay their foot soldiers was itself evidence of a remarkable fact about the 2004 election, and one that makes the Republicans' success all the more striking. In alluding to the parity in fund-raising capabilities, James Carville understated the case: in fact, the Democrats outspent the Republicans for the first time in memory. They did this by means of "527 committees," named after a loophole in the campaign-finance reform laws that allows "independent" political organizations to raise and spend money without limit.

This loophole was especially useful to labor unions and to persons of large means, and both of these constituencies turned out to be on the same side. Although Republicans remain the party preferred by the upper class, the Democrats are favored by the super-rich. A number of these extremely wealthy individuals, led by multi-billionaire George Soros, poured millions into 527's like MoveOn, ACT (Americans Coming Together), and the Media Fund, whose main purpose was to defeat George Bush. Since 2000, according to the non-partisan Center for Public Integrity, Democratic and liberal 527's spent $292 million while Republican and conservative groups spent $113 million. In addition, labor-affiliated groups spent $192 million compared to a mere $17 million by business-affiliated groups.

This substantial discrepancy more than offset the modest spending advantage enjoyed by the Bush campaign and the Republican National Committee. To have at last overcome the Republicans' financial dominance, and to have lost nonetheless, no doubt deepened the Democrats' sense of post-election misery—all the more so since the Republicans are unlikely to allow this spending coup to repeat itself.

V

IN ADDITION to the specter of long-term status as an opposition party, another root of Democratic distress lay in the prominent role played in the campaign by "born-again" or evangelical Christians, a constituency with whom Bush identified himself. Hence the numerous overwrought references to the looming dangers of theocracy, fundamentalism, and even "jihad."

According to the standard version, Karl Rove, the tactical genius behind Bush, had contrived to mobilize large numbers of these religious zealots whose votes, explained the *Times* columnist Paul Krugman, were "motivated, above all, by their opposition to abortion and gay rights (and in the background, opposition to minority rights)." The primary devices for rousing these Americans from their previous political lethargy were federal and state initiatives against gay marriage; once gotten to the ballot box, they could be counted on to pull the lever (or press the screen) for Bush and the GOP ticket.

For those subscribing to this analysis, Rove's master plan was vindicated when the main exit poll revealed that a larger proportion of voters (22 percent) named "moral values" than any other issue as the one that most determined their ballot; these same voters chose Bush over Kerry by a ratio of 80 to 18. But the analysis turns out to be faulty in almost every respect. It is probably true that more evangelicals voted in 2004 than before. But more people in all religious and other demographic categories did, too, and the evidence strongly suggests

* In light of the notorious error of exit-poll reports on election day that showed a win for Kerry, one may wonder about the validity of such polling. But the problem had arisen from the release of early and partial results. The full, final poll yielded a result (51 percent for Bush and 48 percent for Kerry) closely mirroring the actual outcome. I owe a special thank-you to my astute colleague, Karlyn Bowman, who generously shared her extensive polling data with me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that evangelicals increased their vote no more than the rest of the population.

It may be impossible to know for sure, because the 2004 exit poll was the first to ask voters specifically whether or not they considered themselves "evangelical or born-again." But the proportion identifying themselves as Protestants or other non-Catholic Christians—54 percent—remained exactly the same as in the last two elections. In theory, one might posit a significant increase in the evangelical share of the vote in 2004 counterbalanced by an equivalent *decrease* in the non-evangelical Protestant share, but there is no evidence of this, and the hypothesis is far-fetched.

Nor can we know what to make of the datum that 22 percent chose "moral values" as their most important issue—a choice not on offer before. For one thing, as Charles Krauthammer has pointed out, the term was a catch-all, less specific than the other domestic issues—the economy/jobs, taxes, health care, education—listed individually on the menu presented to respondents. Had the list offered gay marriage, abortion, and crime as discrete choices, the "moral-values" group would have fractured, and none of the individual pieces would have loomed so large. Iraq and terrorism were listed separately, and were chosen respectively by 15 and 19 percent. Had *they* been aggregated, as in previous elections, into the single category of "foreign policy" or "world affairs," then the 34 percent presumably choosing this category would have overshadowed the "moral-values" group. (None of this, of course, is to deny that moral values were important, as they always are.)

It also seems untrue that ballot initiatives barring gay marriage activated voters to the advantage of Bush. Yes, Bush's share in the eleven states offering such referenda increased over 2000, but it increased in almost all other states as well—as one would expect from the overall outcome. In six of those eleven states, moreover, Bush's improved showing *trailed* his average improvement in other states. This was markedly so in Ohio, the crucial swing state where Bush garnered only 1 percent more than he had in 2000.*

VI

If the principal claims about the role of evangelical voters were false, it does seem that this group participated in the election with more élan and self-confidence than in the past. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a sizable contingent of Bush volunteers was drawn from their ranks, perhaps buoyed by a President who has testified to being one of them.

But this, even if true, does not suffice to explain the vituperation aimed at them. For that, the cause seems to be twofold. First, to the liberal pundits, the religiosity of Bush and many of his supporters is in itself disturbing or repugnant: they are seen as utterly close-minded and impervious to reason. "We're entering another dark age," worried Maureen Dowd, adding that religious voters were motivated by "the fear of scientific progress." "It's scary," confessed her fellow *Times* columnist Bob Herbert. "How do you make a rational political pitch to people who have put that part of their brain on hold?"

The second reason had to do with the palpable need of the Democrats to blame their defeat on the shortcomings not of themselves but of the electorate. Some of them have done this quite regularly in recent decades. Reagan's victories in the 1980's were ascribed to the personal and economic venality of the voters: "selfishness, this greed, this new championship of caring only for yourself," as Mondale put it in the closing days of the 1984 election. Now, Bush's triumph was ascribed to another base characteristic: religious primitivism. Blind to the irony, some liberal commentators in 2004 even began to bemoan the electorate's *lack* of selfishness. "Many of these formerly nonvoting white evangelicals are remaining true to their unworldliness," commented the *New Yorker*'s Hendrik Hertzberg sardonically. "In voting for [Bush] they have voted against their own material (and, some might imagine, spiritual) well-being."

VII

Were the voters voting against themselves? And if so, why? Hertzberg's assertion leads back to the fundamental question of the election: why, when the Democrats had all the advantages enumerated by Carville, and when the bad news from Iraq was continuing to roll in, did Bush win? And why did Kerry lose?

Bush did win—and not merely as a result of the artful maneuverings of Karl Rove. "From the beginning," reported Matt Bai in the *New York Times Magazine*, "Kerry's advisers said that the election would be principally a referendum on Bush," whose job-approval ratings hovered around 50-50 throughout the campaign. That such a referendum would work to

* Do those who voted down gay marriage bear an animus against homosexuals? Some may, but it seems likely that most were motivated by a wish to defend the battered institution of marriage rather than a wish to injure homosexuals. All the less is there any evidence for Krugman's gratuitous assertion that evangelicals or "values voters" were motivated by racial prejudice. In making this charge without a shred of sustaining proof, Krugman illuminated not their bigotry but his own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kerry's benefit was reaffirmed by Bill Clinton, the Democrats' most astute politician. "If you're the issue in this campaign, you lose," Clinton told Kerry. "If he's the issue . . . you win."

The exit poll showed this to be false. To the question of whether they had voted mainly "*for* your candidate" or "*against* his opponent," the pros outnumbered the antis by a ratio of 69 to 25 percent. Within the group that cast a ballot for negative reasons, more than two-thirds went for Kerry (that is, against Bush), while those who voted for positive reasons favored Bush over Kerry by 59 to 40. Put another way, four-fifths of Bush's voters felt they were voting mainly in his favor; only one-fifth felt they were in essence voting against Kerry.

Voters citing the economy or Iraq as their main issue went overwhelmingly for Kerry; those naming terrorism or moral values went no less overwhelmingly for Bush. Asked about the qualities of their preferred candidate, those saying he "is intelligent," "cares about people like me," and "will bring about needed change" went in large proportions for Kerry; those saying he "has strong religious faith," "is honest and trustworthy," "is a strong leader," "has clear stands on the issues" heavily favored Bush.

Alas, the poll did not ask whether voters had based their choice mostly on issues or on individual qualities, but there is some evidence to suggest that Bush benefited from positive feelings toward him personally. The *Times* distributed a team of reporters to roughly a half-dozen venues around the country to talk to voters (not to poll them or draw a scientific sample). The conclusion of their pooled experience was this: "The voices of American voters the day after the election fairly shouted that the outcome was not about electoral tactics or issues, but about a fundamental question of character." There was something most people liked about the President.

There was also something many disliked about Kerry. For all his effectiveness in the debates or on the stump, Kerry's patrician demeanor was a liability. If Bush's folksy style and religious conviction put him at one with a large part of his constituency, Kerry spoke to his supporters across a great class divide. "I will fight for you," he said again and again, inadvertently underscoring the gulf between himself and them. *Newsweek* recounted one effort to get around this at a campaign stop in Wisconsin, where Kerry "earnestly told the crowd that he knew how hard it was to find the right financial options because he had two children and three stepchildren. His audience," reported *Newsweek*, "mostly farmers and laborers and small businessmen, audibly laughed at him."

This may have been one more reason why Kerry chose to emphasize his Vietnam record at the party's national convention. His military service not only demonstrated courage and patriotism; it was also the one episode of his life that situated him with the common man. But this tactic backfired as well, since Vietnam was a formative experience not only for Kerry but also for contemporary American politics, and its legacy has been distinctly harmful to the Democrats.

VIII

THE ERA of Democratic dominance in the 20th century was shaped by the muscular presidency of Franklin Roosevelt—activist at home as well as abroad. FDR's New Deal defined a domestic liberalism that consisted of government intervention in the economy to provide jobs and social insurance. Its constituency was blue-collar, and its exemplars, after Roosevelt, were Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson.

This tradition was ruptured in the late 1960's and early 1970's when the movement against the Vietnam war redefined liberalism around the issues of peace, race, and freedom of "lifestyle," and on behalf of a new constituency of college students and graduates. The new liberalism was effective in defeating the old liberalism in the battle for control of the Democratic party, but it proved pitifully weak against the Republicans.

In the 30 to 40 years following this transformation, only two Democrats captured the White House. The first was Carter in 1976 and the second was Clinton. Both were governors from the South who were taken for conservatives and who labored to reinforce that impression. Carter, as one of his long-time associates explained at the time, liked to "campaign conservative and govern liberal." It was a formula that could work for one election with any given electorate. He used it to become governor of Georgia, then forsook reelection to run for the presidency. For this it also proved successful, but when he sought reelection, his true colors having been revealed, he was roundly trounced by the upstart Reagan.

Clinton's was a more complicated story. He campaigned in 1992 as a "New Democrat," code for "not a liberal." Once in office, he too shifted abruptly to the Left, but, perhaps to his good fortune, retribution came down on him faster than on Carter. In the mid-term elections of 1994, the Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich touting his "contract with America," won a stunning sweep, impelling the agile Clinton to execute a sharp turn back to the center. Announcing that "the age of big

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

government is over," he signed conservative legislation on welfare reform and the "defense of marriage, and spoke out for stronger anti-crime measures," V-chips on televisions, school uniforms, and restrictions on teen smoking. In short, he made himself the champion of what were then called "family values," more or less the same issues that in the 2004 exit polls acquired the label "moral values."

Liberals, like one-time Kennedy aide Richard N. Goodwin, protested that "the venerable principles of the party . . . have been abandoned." But few Democratic politicians were willing to argue with Clinton's success. "We're all New Democrats now," declared the then House minority leader Richard Gephardt.

One lingering illustration of the change was the bipartisan support for the war against terrorism following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Not only did most Democrats support the Republican President in using force to oust Afghanistan's Taliban regime, but Senate Democrats voted to authorize the more controversial war in Iraq by 29 to 21. By comparison, when Bush's father had sought authorization for war in 1990 in the face of Iraq's outright aggression against Kuwait, only ten Democratic Senators had voted "yea" to 45 "nays." (In the House, Democrats opposed the recent war by a ratio of three to two; they had opposed the first Gulf war by more than two to one.)

IX

But no sooner had the presidential sweepstakes opened than the Democrats' newfound hawkishness started to fade. Howard Dean, an obscure Vermont governor, leaped to the head of the pack by positioning himself as the party's antiwar candidate. Conversely, contenders like Gephardt and Senator Joseph Lieberman, who supported the war on terror and in Iraq, soon saw their campaigns founder. Only Kerry managed to withstand the Dean momentum and eventually subdue it. He tilted his message toward the antiwar camp by voting in the Senate against an $87-billion appropriation of funds for the occupation and reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq, and, much to the relief of the party establishment, succeeded in besting Dean in the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

Kerry, however, was a peculiar standard-bearer for Democratic centrism. He was from Massachusetts, the only state that had voted for George McGovern in 1972, and analyses of congressional voting records, whether by non-partisan sources like *National Journal* or by liberal groups like Americans for Democratic Action, showed him to be one of the Senate's most liberal members. As *Newsweek*'s correspondent described it, Kerry was "a little hurt that Dean had run as the 'movement' candidate against" him, since he "still saw himself as the reform-minded antiwar protester who had . . . tossed away his ribbons."

The reference was to a 1971 demonstration sponsored by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), a radical group of which Kerry was the most prominent leader. In 1970 and again in 1971, he had traveled to Paris to meet with representatives of North Vietnam and the Vietcong, and he had returned as an ardent advocate of their official "eight-point peace plan." While working hand in hand with the Communists, he accused American forces of war crimes "committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command."

The publicity Kerry garnered as an antiwar spokesman was his springboard to public office. He served first in local and state government, but on winning election to the Senate in 1984 he declared that his "passion" remained the "issue of war and peace." As his first major foreign-policy cause, he championed the "nuclear freeze." He sought cancellation of numerous American weapons systems, both nuclear and conventional, railing against what he called "the military-industrial corporate welfare complex." He criticized the U.S. intervention in Grenada as "a bully's show of force," and made himself one of the two most implacable Senate critics of aid to anti-Communist guerrillas in Nicaragua.

This dovishness lasted throughout the cold war but did not end with it. When Saddam Hussein swallowed up Kuwait in 1990, Kerry was one of the Democrats voting no on the use of force against him. And in 1995, he was one of 29 Senators to oppose lifting the embargo on Bosnian Muslims facing ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Serbs.

A record like this would have been too much baggage to carry in a presidential race even in normal times, much less with the nation at war. But Kerry held a trump card of sorts—his four months of perilous service captaining a Swift Boat in Vietnam—and he played it artfully. First, he arranged for the respected historian Douglas Brinkley to publish a 500-page book at the start of the election year based on Kerry's own war-time diaries, chronicling those intense days in vivid detail. Then, he made his service in the Navy the theme of the Democratic convention: the dais appeared designed to evoke a nautical setting, the stage was jammed with officers, and Kerry introduced himself with a salute and the corny declaration, "I'm reporting for duty."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

X

THE STRATAGEM seemed to be working perfectly. Unfortunately for Kerry, it also roiled a group of veterans still bitter over his antiwar declamations, including a few of his old mates and commanders who had come in for rough treatment in Brinkley's book. They organized Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, published a book of their own, and produced a string of TV ads impeaching Kerry's war record and decrying his antiwar activities. In the ads, former POW's testified that they had endured torture for refusing to make the kind of war-crimes accusations against American forces that Kerry had tossed around so blithely. While some of Kerry's fellow sailors appeared by his side at campaign stops, a larger number of the Swift Boat crewmen associated themselves with his detractors.

The response from Kerry's supporters in the press was quick in coming. The *New York Times* weighed in with a 3,500-word, front-page article debunking the claims of the Swift Boat ads as "riddled with inconsistencies" and revealing, as if this meant anything, that the group had received donations from some individuals who also helped finance Republican causes. Thereafter, *Times* news stories mentioning the Swift Boat group regularly carried the description, "whose past accusations have frequently been unsubstantiated," or similar words. But the *Times*'s indictment cast doubt only on what these veterans said about the battles in which Kerry had won his medals. The more important part of their case focused on his antiwar activities, and on this the paper was notably quiet.

In fact, no doubt fell on the Swift Boat veterans' charges on this score, whereas it was Kerry himself who misrepresented his record. He had, for example, denied being present at a climactic November 1971 leadership meeting of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which debated whether the group should launch a campaign of assassination of U.S. political leaders. The proposal was voted down, but the very fact that it was seriously considered shows just how far out VVAW was. When FBI files (released under the Freedom of Information Act) revealed that Kerry had indeed been present at the meeting, he changed his story, admitting he may have been there but claiming he had "no personal recollection" of it. The FBI files, however, show Kerry to have been a main protagonist in two days of ferocious debate, culminating in his withdrawal from leadership of the group. This was high drama, a turning point in his career—and impossible to forget.

Nor was this the only untruth that Kerry told about Vietnam. Again and again over 25 years, in news interviews and in one dramatic speech on the Senate floor, he claimed that he had been sent across the Vietnamese border into Cambodia on a secret and illegal mission that was "seared" in his memory. Kerry's Swift Boat mates called this into question, and it emerged that he had simply made up the story out of whole cloth. The *Times* passed lightly over this episode, as if the lies or fantasies of a man who might be President were less newsworthy than the "unsubstantiated" statements of his critics.

Despite the *Times*, the veterans' broadside was probably the turning point of the campaign. It punctured Kerry's image as a hero, and it reinforced questions about his suitability to lead the country in wartime. These questions stemmed not only from his past but also from his recent stance, or rather stances, on the Iraq war.

Kerry's vote against the $87-billion appropriation was hard to square with his prior vote to authorize the war. His explanations only made things worse—like his famous statement that "I actually did vote for the 87 billion before I voted against it," or his assertion that he had voted to authorize force because he believed it would help avert the use of force. As if this were not confusing enough, Kerry told an interviewer in August that if he had to do it over again, knowing there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, he would have supported the war nonetheless; and then he unleashed the campaign slogan that Iraq was "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." To Kerry, Iraq showed that the U.S. should meet a "global test" before using force, but in 1990, after the elder Bush had passed the global test by winning authorization from the UN Security Council, Kerry voted against the use of force anyway—and then in 2004 he said that, despite that vote, he had actually been in *favor* of the use of force.

The *Times*'s election postmortem put the best face on it: "Kerry['s] nuanced statements about Iraq gave the [Republicans] an opening . . . to attack him as a 'flip-flopper.'"

XI

ACTUALLY, KERRY was not so much a flip-flopper as a man desperate to avoid seeming soft. This was no doubt the impulse behind his repeated invocations of Ronald Reagan, whom in life he had called a man of "moral darkness." More important, it underlay his insistence that he would conduct a "more effective war against terror." Some of his backers, like the financier George Soros, had objected to use of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the war metaphor altogether, arguing that terrorism was better treated as crime. Despite his tough rhetoric, Kerry's approach was closer to that of Soros than of Bush.

Thus, asked what his "more effective" war would consist of, Kerry said that, "most importantly" we could do a better job

> of restoring America's reputation as a country that listens, is sensitive, brings people to our side, is the seeker of peace, not war, and that uses our high moral ground and high-level values to augment us in the war on terror, not to diminish us.

Then he drew an analogy between terrorism and the gambling and prostitution that he had dealt with as a prosecutor in Massachusetts: "We have to get back to the place we were, where terrorists are not the focus of our lives, but they're a nuisance."

Again trying to sound tough, Kerry also said repeatedly that he would "find and kill" Osama bin Laden. In this connection, he chided the Bush administration for having "outsourced" to our Afghan allies the siege of Tora Bora, the Afghan redoubt where bin Laden may have been hiding. But this criticism was incongruent with his simultaneous complaint that, in Iraq, Americans rather than our allies were doing too much of the fighting. And in any case, bin Laden seemed unimpressed by Kerry's threat.

Quite the contrary. Days before the vote, the al Qaeda terrorist released a videotape that amounted to an endorsement of the Democratic candidate. Kerry was later to say this tape cost him the election, by heightening the issue of terrorism in voters' minds. But his claim flew in the face of the final exit poll, according to which voters who said they were influenced by the tape were *more* likely to have voted for him.

Bin Laden's endorsement was largely missed by the American media, having been lost in translation. In his peroration, bin Laden promised that "any state that does not toy with our security automatically guarantees its own." But the Arabic word for "state" was misunderstood by U.S. news outlets as "country," at least until the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) pointed out that what bin Laden very clearly meant was one of the 50 states of the Union, and that what he intended to convey was that states going for Kerry would be immune from attacks by al Qaeda.

How voters would have reacted had the tape come out earlier in the campaign, with more time for analysts to parse it, is unknowable. But it might well have helped Bush—and not only because of its partiality to Kerry. In bin Laden's relentless inveighing against the President, the tape was also an inadvertent confession of fear. This element was well caught by a columnist for the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*:

> [T]he tape is one of capitulation and bankruptcy, and not one of threat and warning, since bin Laden appears in regular robes and not in a military uniform with a rifle by his side. . . . In addition, bin Laden does not refer at all to jihad in this tape. . . . The tape tells George Bush: "Leave us alone, and we will leave you alone." It is obvious, from both the language and the body language, that this is a speech of a man who is capitulating, withdrawing, or trying to "change his spots" from a jihad fighter to a politician.

With this from the horse's mouth, it would have been all the harder for voters to credit Kerry's promise to fight a "more effective war on terror" than Bush.

XII

Whatever his real stance on terrorism, Kerry's forthright opposition to the Iraq war did win him an extraordinarily intense following in at least one place: the chic corners of Manhattan and Hollywood that also hated Bush for his association with the censorious religious Right. As the *Times* reported, "Dozens of celebrities had thrown their weight behind the Democratic candidate. . . . Sean Penn knocked on doors in New Mexico. Leonardo DiCaprio, Jon Bon Jovi, and Bruce Springsteen tirelessly stumped for Mr. Kerry."

This was a mixed blessing, since the performers furnished frequent and ample reminders of what many Americans find objectionable in their wares. But Kerry seemed oblivious to the problem. At a star-studded benefit performance for the Kerry campaign at Radio City Music Hall, Whoopi Goldberg pointed to her crotch and said: "Keep Bush where it belongs and not in the White House." Following this, Kerry came out and declared: "Every performer tonight . . . conveyed to you the heart and soul of our country." A couple of weeks later, the rap "artist" Eminem released the catchy antiwar lyric: "We gonna let him know,/Stomp, push, shove, mush, fuck Bush,/Until they bring our troops home." Commented Kerry: "I heard Eminem on *Saturday Night Live* last night. I heard the song. . . . I like it."

Emblematic of the role of the entertainment industry was the release of Michael Moore's movie *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Moore had first gained public attention in the mid-1980's when he was fired after only a few months as editor of the leftist glossy, *Mother Jones*. The publishers said he had failed to perform his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duties, but Moore insisted the reason was his refusal to publish a dispatch from Nicaragua containing criticisms of the Sandinista government. Any such criticism, he asserted, would play into the hands of President Reagan and was in any case probably false.

As a film-maker, Moore has eased away from doctrinaire pro-Sandinism to eclectic anti-Americanism. Bin Laden, he suggests, should really be called "USAma," since "we trained him to be a terrorist," just as we financed the Taliban. The Bush family is in cahoots with the bin Ladens, and invaded Afghanistan in search of profits for American oil companies. Not only is there no terrorist threat, but Iraq before the U.S. invasion was a serene country that "had never attacked or threatened to attack the United States . . . [and] never murdered a single American." Today, "the Iraqis who have risen up against the occupation are not 'insurgents' or 'terrorists' or 'The Enemy.' They are the REVOLUTION, the Minutemen, and their numbers will grow—and they will win."

There is, in Moore's universe, only one real threat to the world:

> I agree with the NRA when they say, "Guns don't kill people; people kill people," except I would alter that to say, "Guns don't kill people, Americans kill people." We're the only country that does this, and we do it on a personal level in our neighborhoods and within our families and our schools, and we do it on a global level.

It is easy to see from this why Moore should have become the darling of Europeans who hate America—he received a thirteen-minute ovation at the Cannes film festival, and three of his books about "stupid, white" Americans grace Germany's best-seller list. It is harder to see why the Democratic campaign thought it wise to treat him as a hero. Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, appeared at the Washington, D.C. opening of *Fahrenheit 9/11*, as did the Senate minority leader Tom Daschle and as much as "half of the Democratic Senate," according to Senator Bob Graham of Florida. Moore was given a VIP seat alongside Jimmy Carter at the Democratic national convention. *Fahrenheit 9/11* was also screened there by a major labor union; by some accounts it was the week's most popular event. Asked directly about the film, Kerry's spokesman Matt Miller stopped just shy of a flat endorsement. "The movie certainly has fired up a lot of people and gotten them excited to go out and work," he said.

In contrast to Kerry, Bill Clinton had sought out symbolic ways to portray himself as a cultural conservative. In 1992, while still governor of Arkansas, he had flown home to assure the execution of a mentally disabled cop-killer, thus showing voters that his support for capital punishment was not mere rhetoric. He had confronted a rap performer, Sister Souljah, over her appeals to blacks to murder white people. Kerry might have helped his case had he rebuked Moore or Whoopi or Eminem. Instead, his association with them reinforced his image as an unreconstructed liberal.

XIII

ASKED IN a *Newsweek* poll whether Kerry was too liberal, 48 percent said yes while 45 percent said no. The same poll asked if Bush was too conservative. Thirty-seven percent said yes, 58 percent said no. A Gallup poll, with a question worded somewhat differently, showed a smaller discrepancy but pointed in the same direction.

This difference was crucial. Thirty-four percent of voters described themselves as conservative, and they went for Bush overwhelmingly. Twenty-one percent called themselves liberals, and they overwhelmingly preferred Kerry. As always, moderates were the largest bloc (45 percent), and they tilted modestly toward the Democrat (54 to 45); but that was not enough to overcome the 3-to-2 ratio of conservatives to liberals. Unsurprisingly, four-fifths of the voters who said their family's financial situation was better now than four years ago favored Bush, and the same proportion of those who said they were worse off favored Kerry. But even this most personal and self-interested of indicators was a less powerful vote-determinant than ideology.

The exit poll yielded many interesting and suggestive correlations. Men preferred Bush by 11 percentage points, while women preferred Kerry by 3, adding up to a "gender gap" of 14 points. This was dwarfed, however, by a 33-point "marriage gap," with married voters favoring Bush by 15 points while the unmarried favored Kerry by 18. There was also a large church-going gap. Those who said they attended religious services one or more times per week went for Bush 61 to 39; those who attended only occasionally preferred Kerry 53 to 47; and those who never attended gave Kerry a margin of 62 to 36. A majority of Hispanics voted for the Democrat, but a much smaller one than four years earlier. Other minority groups—Asians, blacks, Jews—also backed Kerry, but again gave Bush a little more support than last time.

It was in light of these numbers that Democrats after the election began to ask themselves what to do, and where to look, next. A few voices urged their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

party rightward. The *Times*'s Nicholas Kristof cited the model of Tony Blair's revivification of the British Labor party, adding: "I wish that winning were just a matter of presentation, but it's not. It involves compromising on principles." A group of Senators from states that voted for Bush announced the formation of a new organization, Third Way, aimed at pushing the party away from the Left. This was reminiscent of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), created in 1972 following George McGovern's disastrous loss to Richard Nixon, and of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), established in 1984 following Mondale's loss to Reagan.

But neither of those earlier groups succeeded in overcoming the weight of opinion among party activists and thinkers. CDM was soundly defeated by party liberals, while the DLC was largely coopted by liberal Democratic politicians who flocked to its "moderate" banner without much changing their stands on issues.

Other voices urged the party leftward. The *Times*'s Bob Herbert warned that "Some Democrats are casting covetous eyes on voters whose values, in many cases, are frankly repellent." His colleague Paul Krugman argued in a similar vein that "rather than catering to voters who will never support them, the Democrats . . . need to become equally effective at mobilizing their own base." And Joe Trippi, Howard Dean's campaign manager, argued that what has done in the Democrats has been "ignoring their base" by "running to the middle."

This group is likely to be reinforced by the considerable muscle of organized labor within the party. Once, under the leadership of George Meany and Lane Kirkland, the labor movement provided ballast for Democratic centrists against the party's Left. But a decade ago the Left triumphed within the labor movement itself, ousting Kirkland from the presidency of the AFL-CIO in favor of John Sweeney, a member of Democratic Socialists of America. Sweeney failed in his pledge to make the movement grow, and today he is being pressed by insurgents who stand even further to the Left.

Still other Democrats called on their party to adopt the language of values and religion, as if these were foreign tongues that could be mastered through effort. E.J. Dionne urged "religious moderates and progressives to insist that social justice and inclusion are 'moral values' and that war and peace are 'life issues.'" The liberal columnist Harold Meyerson said the party should put forward candidates "who can wrap the values of tolerance in the language of faith." A consortium of liberal church groups released a poll purporting to show that what the largest number of Americans think of as moral issues are the war in Iraq, "greed and materialism," and "poverty and economic justice."

All of this seemed to rest on the premise that religious voters or those emphasizing values do not really know their own minds, and it rightly earned a reprimand from Democratic Congressman Rahm Emanuel: "People aren't going to hear what we say until they know that we don't approach them as Margaret Mead would an anthropological experiment." If the Democrats' problem was only about the wrapping, it would have been solved by having—as they did—no fewer than twelve clergymen addressing their national convention (to a mere six for the Republicans).

XIV

The most trenchant if also the most revealing postmortem was offered by Andrei Cherny, who had worked for Kerry as a speechwriter in 2003. "What we don't have and what we sorely need," Cherny said, is "a worldview that makes a thematic argument about where America is headed and where we want to take it."

This sounds exactly right, but Cherny was unable to suggest what that worldview might be. In this sense, the Democrats were lucky in 2004 that the news from Iraq seemed so bad. Despite Kerry's incoherence on the subject, voters unhappy about the situation understandably held it against Bush, thus diminishing the Republican advantage on national-security issues. But that advantage held nevertheless; it goes back to the Democrats' dovish turn during Vietnam, and is not likely to disappear soon.

Neither is the Democrats' deficit on "moral values." The label may have been a new invention of the pollsters, but (as I have already indicated) the same constellation of issues has been around for a long time. It was called "family values" in the 1990's, "social issues" in the 1980's, and "the three A's" (amnesty, abortion, and acid) in the 1970's. Whatever the name, these issues, too, have consistently worked to the advantage of the Republicans. A large share of voters always calls itself "conservative," and it is their feelings on these matters in particular that make them so.

The Democrats' answer to all this has taken the form of an appeal to economic issues and a defense of the social safety net. There is reason to believe that this is an asset of diminishing worth. It was observed long ago that man does not live by bread alone; as the country has grown steadily wealthier, with fewer individuals facing insecurity over basic necessities, it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should not be surprising that economic factors come to figure lower in voters' priorities. As the *Washington Post* noted, 26 of the 28 states with the lowest average income voted for Bush.

Were these people voting "against their own interests"? It is unlikely they saw it that way. If they placed some other issue ahead of economics, they were asserting their priorities. As the liberal columnist Richard Cohen pointed out, Jewish voters, who as a group are wealthy, vote against their own economic interests when they back liberal candidates, and "Christian conservatives can make the same hard choices."

It is true that voters tend to see the Republicans as the party of the rich. Asked whether Bush paid more attention to the interests of large corporations or of ordinary Americans, 54 percent said the former, 41 percent the latter. Voters who cited the economy as their most important issue went for Kerry five to one, and voters who said that what mattered most to them was a candidate who "cares about people like me" opted for Kerry over Bush three to one. In view of Bush's regular-guy persona and Kerry's patrician remoteness, the reason for this must have been simply that Kerry was the Democrat.

Yet when it came to *policy*, the answers tilted in a different direction. Asked whether government should "do more to solve problems" or "is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals," voters opted for the latter by 49 to 46. Asked whether Bush's tax cuts had been good or bad for the nation's economy, 41 percent said good and 32 percent bad. Asked whom they would trust to handle the economy, they gave the edge to Bush by 3 percentage points.

Taken together, these numbers suggest that the problem for the Democrats goes beyond voters who choose to put other issues ahead of economic ones. The problem is whether the party can win even on economic issues. While Bush suffered from the mediocre performance of the economy during his first term (Presidents always get more blame or credit for this than they deserve), and while the Democrats retain the cachet of being the party of the common man, support for their economic policies has been leaching away.

This erosion is something that the Democrats, who already trail Republicans on issues of national security and values, cannot afford. If it continues, and unless the party can fulfill Cherny's goal of developing some new vision, they will win the presidency or Congress only when scandal or recession or defeat in war lays the Republicans low. The rest of the time, the GOP will reign. If this is the abyss into which the pundits peered, little wonder that they became so deranged. Hard, brutish times indeed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arafat Lives

Efraim Karsh

No sooner was Yasir Arafat declared dead at the French military hospital to which he had been dramatically rushed in early November than a vast cohort of world leaders, from King Abdullah of Jordan to French President Jacques Chirac, began to voice hopes for a quick revival of the Middle East peace process. "The best tribute to President Arafat's memory will be to intensify our efforts to establish a peaceful and viable state of Palestine," declared the European Union's foreign-policy chief, Javier Solana. At the same time, Solana unveiled a new plan to facilitate the so-called road map drafted in 2003 by the EU, the U.S., Russia, and the UN—but in "a less incremental manner": that is, by deleting the proviso conditioning progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state on a cessation of violence and terrorism.

Tony Blair, the British prime minister, echoed Solana's view. In 2003, in the run-up to the Iraq war, Blair had sought to pacify his domestic critics by urging on George W. Bush at least the appearance of "progress" between the Israelis and Palestinians before confronting Saddam Hussein. As the war unfolded, and as his popularity at home and in Europe plummeted, Blair kept on repeating the theme. In October 2004, he told a Labor-party conference that he would make Middle East peace "a personal priority" after the U.S. elections; a few weeks later, he responded to Bush's reelection with an emphatic call for a renewed effort to resolve this "single most pressing political challenge in our world today." After all, said Blair, an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians would help critically in "resolving the conditions and causes on which the terrorists prey."

Blair's conviction that the revival of the Middle East peace process would alleviate the situation in Iraq and reduce the threat of international terrorism struck a responsive chord in some quarters in the United States as well. "As Mr. Blair, the Europeans, and Arab states like Egypt constantly point out, the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate feeds Muslim anger and despair, giving a larger rationale to terrorist groups like al Qaeda and to the insurgency in Iraq," ran an editorial in the *New York Times*. "Before the Iraq war," the paper continued, "Mr. Bush had been told that 'the road to Jerusalem passed through Baghdad,' but with Iraq today a magnet for anti-Western fervor, it is increasingly believed in the region that the formula is the other way around." Former Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush, who during their own terms in office had helped foster Arab-Israeli dialogue, hastened to add their separate articulations of this same idea.

Nevertheless, when he arrived in Washington on November 11 as the first foreign leader to visit the White House since the elections, Blair failed to

Efraim Karsh *is head of Mediterranean studies at King's College, University of London. The paperback edition of his book,* Arafat's War, *is just out from Grove.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

persuade the American President either to endorse an international peace conference in London early next year or to appoint a personal envoy to the Middle East. "I'm all for conferences," the President told a joint press briefing, "just so long as the conferences produce something." He then proceeded to reiterate his commitment to the strategic vision he had outlined in June 2002—namely, that Palestinian democratization would have to precede rather than follow the creation of an independent state. While he promised "to use the next four years to spend the capital of the United States" on the creation of such a state, Bush made it eminently clear that the onus was on the Palestinians to ensure that this objective was achieved:

> It is impossible to think that the President of the United States or the prime minister of Great Britain can impose our vision. I think it's unrealistic to say, "Well, Bush wants it done," or, "Blair wants it done," therefore it'll happen. . . . If you choose not to be helped, if you decide you don't want a free, democratic society, there's nothing we can do. If you think you can have peace without democracy, again, I think you'll find that—I can only speak for myself—that I will be extremely doubtful that it will ever happen.

At the heart of Bush's words is an approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict fundamentally at odds with the one endorsed by most of the international community. In order to understand the role played by Yasir Arafat in creating the present impasse between Israel and the Palestinians, it helps to have some notion of what is at stake between these two contending visions.

THE BELIEF that Arabs and Israelis can be forced into a lasting peace by outside influence is based on a perception of Middle Eastern politics as an offshoot of global power politics. There is a long history—political, military, and diplomatic—behind this perception, which informed the actions of generations of modern policy-makers in Europe and elsewhere. Unfortunately, the perception is wrong.

Even at the weakest point in their modern history, during World War I and its immediate aftermath, local Middle Eastern actors were decisive in the restructuring of their region. It was not British officialdom but Hussein ibn Ali of the Hashemite family who drove the British to entertain seriously the notion of destroying the Ottoman empire. Impressed by Hussein's promises to raise the Arabic-speaking Ottoman subjects in revolt, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt, accepted his vision of an Arab successor empire and (tentatively) agreed to his main territorial demands. Hussein's and McMahon's initiative would have a considerable impact on the future shape of the Middle East. The emirate of Transjordan (later to be known as the Kingdom of Jordan), for example, was established in 1921 to satisfy the imperial ambitions of Hussein's second son Abdullah, while in the same year the modern state of Iraq was created on behalf of and very much at the instigation of Abdullah's younger brother Faisal.

The bargaining power of local states was substantially enhanced during the cold-war era, when global polarization and the nuclear balance of terror constrained great-power maneuverability. For all their exertions, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union, the two powers that had supplanted the traditional European empires after World War II, had a decisive say in their smaller allies' grand strategies. Time and again they were powerless to contain undesirable regional developments, whether it was Egypt's defection to the American camp in the mid-1970's or the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, or were forced to acquiesce in actions with which they were in total disagreement.

It was on the cardinal issues of war and peace that superpower influence proved least effective. Just as the United States could not force its Arab allies and Israel to accept its position on a political settlement, so the Soviets failed to persuade most of their Arab partners to disavow their total rejection of Israel. Just as Israel launched the 1967 Six-Day war without Washington's blessing when it saw its existence threatened, so Egypt's war of attrition (1969-70) and October war (1973), Syria's military intervention in Lebanon (1976), and the Iraqi invasions of Iran (1980) and Kuwait (1990) took place against Soviet wishes and advice. Only in terminating hostilities did superpower intervention seem to carry any weight, if of a very limited kind and mostly where Israel was concerned. The Soviets failed to convince Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to accept a ceasefire on the first day of the October 1973 war, or to force Syrian president Hafez al-Assad to stop his offensive against the PLO in the summer of 1976.

This is not to say that the U.S. and the USSR slavishly followed the wishes of their junior partners. Rather, whatever success they had was due largely to the convergence of their own wishes with indigenous trends. In the late 1970's, it was the determination of Sadat and Israeli prime minister

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Menachem Begin to end the long-standing enmity between their peoples that rendered American mediation effective. But when the Carter administration attempted to sustain the momentum and bring the Palestinians into the picture, it ran into the brick wall of PLO rejectionism. "This is a lousy deal," Yasir Arafat told the American Edward Said, who had passed him the administration's offer. "We want Palestine. We're not interested in bits of Palestine. We don't want to negotiate with the Israelis. We're going to fight."

Twenty-one years later, Arafat aborted two more presidential attempts to mediate peace with Israel by rejecting, in July and December 2000, Bill Clinton's proposals for the creation of an independent Palestinian state in 95 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with east Jerusalem as its capital. Even after Israel had confined Arafat to his Ramallah compound following the launch of his war of terror in September 2000, and even after President Bush had urged the Palestinians to substitute a new and democratic leadership for Arafat's corrupt and oppressive regime, there was little Washington could do to enforce this vision; Bush was forced to watch helplessly as his own preferred candidate, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), was unceremoniously subverted by Arafat.

Let us assume for the sake of argument that combined U.S.-European pressure succeeded in driving Israelis and Palestinians into a formal peace treaty. Would this, as Blair and others assume, eliminate violence from the wider Middle East or ameliorate the challenge of Islamic terrorism? Hardly—for the simple reason that the Palestinian question has next to nothing to do with either of these.

For one thing, violence was an integral part of Middle Eastern political culture long before the advent of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and physical force remains today the main if not the sole instrument of regional political discourse. For another, the Arab states have never had any real stake in the "liberation of Palestine." Though anti-Zionism has been the core principle of pan-Arab solidarity since the mid-1930's—it is easier, after all, to unite people through a common hatred than through a shared loyalty—pan-Arabism has almost always served as an instrument for achieving the self-interested ends of those who proclaim it.

Consider, for example, the pan-Arab invasion of the newly proclaimed state of Israel in 1948. This, on its face, was a shining demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian people. But the invasion had far less to do with winning independence for the indigenous population than with the desire of the Arab regimes for territorial aggrandizement. Transjordan's King Abdullah wanted to incorporate substantial parts of mandatory Palestine into the greater Syrian empire he coveted; Egypt wanted to prevent that eventuality by laying its hands on southern Palestine. Syria and Lebanon sought to annex the Galilee, while Iraq viewed the 1948 war as a stepping stone in its long-standing ambition to bring the entire Fertile Crescent under its rule. Had the Jewish state lost the war, its territory would not have fallen to the Palestinians but would have been divided among the invading Arab forces.

During the decades following the 1948 war, the Arab states manipulated the Palestinian national cause to their own ends. Neither Egypt nor Jordan allowed Palestinian self-determination in the parts of Palestine they had occupied during the 1948 war (respectively, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). Palestinian refugees were kept in squalid camps for decades as a means of whipping Israel and stirring pan-Arab sentiments. "The Palestinians are useful to the Arab states as they are," Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser candidly responded to an inquiring Western reporter in 1956. "We will always see that they do not become too powerful." As late as 1974, Syria's Hafez al-Assad referred to Palestine as being "not only a part of the Arab homeland but a basic part of southern Syria."

If the Arab states have shown little empathy for the plight of ordinary Palestinians, the Islamic connection to the Palestinian problem is even more tenuous. It is not out of concern for a Palestinian right to national self-determination but as part of a holy war to prevent the loss of a part of the "House of Islam" that Islamists inveigh against the Jewish state of Israel. In the words of the covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, better known by its Arabic acronym Hamas: "The land of Palestine has been an Islamic trust (*waqf*) throughout the generations and until the day of resurrection. . . . When our enemies usurp some Islamic lands, jihad becomes a duty binding on all Muslims."

In this respect, there is no difference between Palestine and other parts of the world conquered by the forces of Islam throughout history. To this very day, for example, Arabs and many Muslims unabashedly pine for the restoration of Spain, and look upon their expulsion from that country in 1492 as a grave historical injustice.

Indeed, even countries that have never been under Islamic imperial rule have become legitimate targets of radical Islamic fervor. Since the late

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1980's, various Islamist movements have looked upon the growing number of French Muslims as a sign that France, too, has become a potential part of the House of Islam. Their British counterparts have followed suit. "We will remodel this country in an Islamic image," the London-based preacher Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad told an attentive audience less than two months after 9/11. "We will replace the Bible with the Qur'an."

This goal need not necessarily be pursued by the sword; it can be achieved through demographic growth and steady conversion to Islam. But should peaceful means prove insufficient, physical force can readily be brought to bear. As illustrated by the overwhelming support for the 9/11 attacks throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, this vision is by no means confined to a disillusioned and obscurantist fringe of Islam. Islam's war for world mastery is a traditional, indeed venerable, quest, and is far from over. In the words of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founding father of the avowedly imperialist regime in Iran:

> The Iranian revolution is not exclusively that of Iran, because Islam does not belong to any particular people. . . . We will export our revolution throughout the world because it is an Islamic revolution. The struggle will continue until the calls, "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah," are echoed all over the world.

Within this grand scheme, the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians is but a single element, and one whose supposed centrality looms far greater in Western than in Islamic eyes.

THIS IS not to deny that resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a pressing issue. But the global ramifications of any settlement will be far narrower than is assumed by well-meaning statesmen like Tony Blair. Quite to the contrary, the best hope of peace between Arabs and Israelis lies in the *rejection* of the spurious "link" between this dispute and other regional and global problems.

The pretense of pan-Arab or pan-Islamic solidarity has long served as a dangerous elixir in Palestinian political circles, stirring unrealistic hopes and expectations and, at key junctures, inciting widespread and horrifically destructive violence. The sooner the Palestinians recognize that their cause is theirs alone, the sooner are they likely to make their own peace with the existence of the state of Israel and to understand the necessity of a negotiated settlement. Toward this end, a good place to start would be in eradicating the disastrous legacy of Yasir Arafat, the so-called "nation-builder."

With the exception of Haj Amin al-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem who led the Palestinian Arabs from the early 1920's to the late 1940's, Arafat did more than any other person in modern Middle Eastern history to *retard* the development of Palestinian civil society and the attainment of Palestinian statehood. Had the mufti led his people to peace and reconciliation with their Jewish neighbors, as he promised the British officials who appointed him to his high rank, the Palestinians would have had their independent state in a substantial part of Mandatory Palestine by 1948, and would have been spared the traumatic experience of dispersion and exile. Had Arafat set the PLO from the start on the path to peace and reconciliation, instead of turning it into the most murderous terrorist organization in modern times, a Palestinian state could have been established in the late 1960's or the early 1970's, in 1979 as a corollary to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, by May 1999 as part of the Oslo process, or at the very latest with the Camp David summit of July 2000.

But then, for all his rhetoric about Palestinian independence, Arafat was never as interested in statehood as in the violence attending its pursuit. As far back as 1968, he famously declared that "Palestine was lost in blood and iron, and it can only be recovered by blood and iron," and he never strayed from this track, though most of the blood he shed had little to do with the "recovery" of Palestine.

In 1970 Arafat nearly brought about the destruction of Jordan, which had generously allowed the Palestinians to use its territory for attacks on Israel. Five years later, he helped trigger the horrendous Lebanese civil war, one of the bloodiest conflicts in modern Middle Eastern history, which raged on for more than a decade and claimed hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. In 1990-91 he supported the brutalization of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, at an exorbitant cost to the Palestinians living there, thousands of whom were murdered in revenge attacks and hundreds of thousands expelled after Kuwait's liberation.

In between these disasters, Arafat made the Palestinian national movement synonymous with violence and terrorism. Notwithstanding the PLO's rhetoric about "armed struggle," only a tiny fraction of its operations, both prior to the 1967 Six-Day war and later, were directed against military targets; most were aimed at innocent civilians. Palestinian terrorists planted bombs in public

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

places, shelled population centers, and attacked villages and towns, taking hostages and murdering men, women, and children. In the late 1960's the PLO introduced attacks on civilian air traffic—mostly bombings and hijackings—into the arsenal of international terrorism. In the 1990's the Palestinians turned suicide bombings, hitherto an esoteric and rarely used method, into the most salient and effective means of modern terror.

And Palestinian statehood? In the late 1970's, Arafat told his close friend and collaborator, the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, that the Palestinians lacked the tradition, unity, and discipline to become a formal state, and that a Palestinian state would be a failure from the first day. In the 1990's, once given control of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the Oslo peace process, he made this bleak prognosis a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Within a short time of its establishment, the Palestinian Authority (PA) had literally become the largest police state in the world, with one policeman for every 40 residents. Backed by a dozen security and intelligence services, all answering directly to Arafat, these forces were ostensibly designed to enforce law and order and to combat anti-Israel terrorism. In reality they served as Arafat's tool vis-à-vis his Palestinian subjects, as an instrument of terror against Israel, and as guardian of the extensive protection and racketeering networks that sprang up in the territories under the PA's control. The largest of these operations were run by top security figures like Muhammad Dahlan in Gaza and Jibril Rajoub in the West Bank, but lower-ranking officials developed their own extortionist techniques, forcing landowners to sell them plots of land at marked-down prices, siphoning a percentage of land and property sales, and coercing ordinary citizens to pay protection money for securing basic rights and services.

On a higher level, Arafat gave control of the Palestinian economy to a group of cronies through a network of monopolies whose revenues never reached the Palestinian population. Into secret bank accounts abroad he siphoned hundreds of millions of dollars donated by the international community for the benefit of the civilian Palestinian population. The surrealist nature of this practice was starkly illustrated in Arafat's last days when his wife Suha, whose sumptuous life in Paris was reportedly financed to the tune of $100,000-$200,000 a month, and who was a major shareholder in a number of large monopolies, would not release her husband's body for burial before imposing her financial conditions on his successors. These, for their part, hired the services of a detective agency to try to trace their chieftain's hidden billions.

Shortly before moving to Gaza in the summer of 1994 to take control of the newly established PA, Arafat told an associate that he had signed the Oslo agreement only because doing so would facilitate Israel's eventual demise. "I know that you are opposed to the Oslo accords," this former colleague has recently quoted Arafat as saying,

> but you must always remember what I'm going to tell you. The day will come when you will see thousands of Jews fleeing Palestine. I will not live to see this, but you will definitely see it in your lifetime. The Oslo accords will help bring this about.

In fact, Arafat never hid from his own people how he saw the Oslo process: as a means not to a two-state solution—Israel and a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza—but to the substitution of a Palestinian state for the state of Israel.

As early as September 8, 1993, five days before signing the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles (DOP), Arafat told an Israeli journalist who came to interview him in his Tunis headquarters: "In the future, Israel and Palestine will be one united state in which Israelis and Palestinians will live together"—that is, Israel would no longer exist. And even as he shook Yitzhak Rabin's hand on the White House lawn, Arafat was assuring the Palestinians in a pre-recorded Arabic-language message broadcast by Jordanian TV that the DOP was merely an implementation of the PLO's "phased strategy" of June 1974. This stipulated that the Palestinians should seize whatever territory Israel was prepared or compelled to cede and use it as a springboard for further territorial gains until achieving the "complete liberation of Palestine."

During the next seven years, until the launch of his terrorist war in late September 2000, Arafat played an intricate game of Jekyll-and-Hyde. Addressing Israeli or Western audiences, he would habitually extol the "peace of the brave" he had signed with "my partner Yitzhak Rabin." To his Palestinian constituents, he would simultaneously depict the peace accords as momentary and transient arrangements. He made constant allusions not only to the "phased strategy" but to the "right of return," a standard Palestinian euphemism for Israel's destruction through demographic subversion. He also leavened his speech with historical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and religious references, most notably alluding to the treaty of Hudaybiya, signed by the Prophet Muhammad with the people of Mecca in 628 only to be disavowed by Muhammad a couple of years later when the situation shifted in his favor.

Further to discredit the idea of peace with the Jewish state, Arafat's PA launched a sustained hate campaign of racial and political incitement, ongoing to this day and unparalleled in scope and intensity since Nazi Germany. Israelis, and Jews more generally, have been portrayed as the source of all evil, synonyms for iniquity, corruption, and decadence, and responsible for every problem, real or imaginary, in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians are not only indoctrinated in the illegitimacy of the state of Israel and the lack of any Jewish connection to the land but are also told of the most outlandish Israeli plots to corrupt and ruin them, wholly congruent with the medieval myth of Jews as secret destroyers and well-poisoners.

Arafat himself led the way in this campaign, charging Israel with killing Palestinian children to get their internal organs, masterminding the suicide bombings of its own civilians, and flooding the territories with weapons in order to precipitate a Palestinian civil war. The Palestinian Authority's minister of health, Riad Zaanun, accused Israeli doctors of using "Palestinian patients for experimental medicines," while the Palestinian representative to the UN's Human Rights Commission in Geneva charged that Israel had injected Palestinian children with the AIDS virus. The director of the PA's committee for consumer protection accused Israel of distributing chocolate infected with "mad cow disease" in the Palestinian territories. The PA minister of ecology, Yusuf Abu Safiyyah, indicted Israel for "dumping liquid waste . . . in Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza." Suha Arafat famously amplified one such charge when, in the presence of Hillary Clinton, she told an audience in Gaza in November 1999 that "our people have been subjected to the daily and extensive use of poisonous gas by the Israeli forces, which has led to an increase in cancer cases among women and children." Little wonder that Arafat's death last November was quickly followed by widespread charges of Israeli poisoning.

Arafat also utilized the immense inflammatory potential of Islam to discredit his Israeli peace partners, if not the idea of peace itself. Week after week, Palestinian preachers used their pulpits to discredit the peace process and to instill hatred for Israelis and Jews. Worshippers have been taught that Jews are the "descendants of apes and pigs" and warned of Zionist machinations to divide the Palestinian people and spawn internecine strife. After Arafat launched his war of terror in September 2000, the Friday preachers embarked on an orgy of anti-Jewish invective and outright calls for the mass murder of Israelis and Jews wherever they were found.

Children have occupied a place of pride in the PA's hate campaign. Over the last decade, Palestinian children have learned about an evil Jewish persona, traceable to biblical times and supposedly accounting for the worldwide persecution of Jews through the ages. In particular they have been indoctrinated with the idea that Jews are, and always have been, implacable enemies of Islam. As they grow up, Palestinian children can join various youth organizations where they are further brainwashed with racist and anti-Semitic ideology. An extensive network of summer camps, modeled on the Nazi youth organization, Hitler Jugend, provides a carefully contrived mixture of ideological indoctrination and military training to thousands of Palestinian youth every year. The camps are named after "martyrs" or spectacular "acts of martyrdom" (i.e., terrorist attacks), and participants are thoroughly imbued with the virtues of death and "martyrdom."

Nor did Arafat confine himself to simply disparaging his peace partner. Making violence the defining characteristic of his rule, he built an extensive terrorist infrastructure in the territories under his control. He refused to disarm the terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad (as required by the Oslo accords) and tacitly approved the murder of hundreds of Israelis by these groups. He also reconstructed the PLO's old terrorist apparatus, mainly under the auspices of the Tanzim, the military arm of Fatah (the PLO's largest constituent organization and Arafat's own alma mater). He frantically acquired large quantities of prohibited weapons, and, eventually, resorted to outright mass violence, first in September 1996 to discredit the newly elected Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then in September 2000, shortly after being offered Palestinian statehood by Netanyahu's successor, Ehud Barak, with the launch of his terror war.

BUT ARAFAT is hardly the only Arab leader to have used mass violence for political ends, to foster a cult of anti-Semitism, or to line his own pockets at his people's expense. He was a typical, if egregious, product of the ruthless Arab political system and a quintessential representative of a generation of cynical and self-seeking "revolutionaries."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nor have his main Palestinian associates been any better. While ordinary Palestinians have scrabbled for a livelihood, PLO officials have enjoyed a luxurious life in sumptuous hotels and villas, globe-trotting in grand style, acquiring properties, and making financial investments worldwide—all from the billions of dollars donated by the Arab oil states and, during the Oslo era, by the international community.

Neither was Arafat alone in his political philosophy. The rejection of the state of Israel and the need for its violent destruction have been constants within the PLO since the days of its hallowed founding document, the Palestinian Covenant, adopted in 1964 and revised four years later to reflect the organization's growing militancy. Having little to say about the Palestinians themselves, the covenant devotes about two-thirds of its 33 articles to the need to destroy Israel, designating "armed struggle" as "the only way to liberate Palestine." Despite signing no fewer than five peace agreements with Israel during the 1990's, the PLO has failed to abolish its covenant as promised and has in fact never shed its total rejection of the Jewish state.

Finally, such attitudes are by no means confined to "hard line" elements within the PLO, like its "foreign minister" Farouq Qadoumi, but are a commonplace among supposed moderates as well. The late Faisal Husseini, widely considered a dove, famously likened the Oslo accords to a Trojan horse designed to bring about Israel's eventual demise. Yasser Abed Rabbo, a co-signatory to the 2003 "Geneva Accords," persistently denied Jewish attachment to the Temple Mount, and by extension to the land of Israel, and vowed to regain "all of Palestine." So did Nabil Shaath, another supposed moderate and dedicated advocate of the Oslo process, and Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala), chief negotiator of the Oslo accord. "We did not sign a peace treaty with Israel, but interim agreements that had been imposed on us," he said in June 1996. "When we accepted the Oslo agreement, we obtained territory but not all the Palestinian territory. . . . We did not and will not relinquish one inch of this territory or the right of any Palestinian to live on it with dignity."

Even Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), after Arafat's death the acting chairman of the PA and perhaps the foremost symbol of supposed Palestinian moderation, has not shied away from denying the existence of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem (or for that matter, the legitimacy of the Jewish claim to Palestine) or from hinting at Israel's eventual destruction. In an interview with an Israeli newspaper in January 1996, for example, Abu Mazen gently restated the PLO's old formula of a democratic state comprising the whole of Palestine, expressing the hope that in the future Jews and Palestinian Arabs "will reach a state of complete mixture" in Palestine. This thinly veiled call for Israel's disappearance was repeated last October in a *New York Times* op-ed by the PLO's legal adviser, Michael Tarazi.

In one way, indeed, Abu Mazen is more extreme than many of his peers. While they revert to standard talk of Israel's illegitimacy, he devoted years of his life to giving ideological firepower to the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish indictment. In a doctoral dissertation written at a Soviet university, an expanded version of which was subsequently published in book form, Abu Mazen endeavored to prove the existence of a close ideological and political association between Zionism and Nazism. Among other things, he argued that fewer than a million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust, and that the Zionist movement was a partner to their slaughter.

In the wake of the failed Camp David summit of July 2000 and the launch of Arafat's war of terror two months later, Abu Mazen went to great lengths to explain why the "right of return" was a non-negotiable prerequisite for any Palestinian-Israeli settlement. "Peace will not be achieved without the refugees getting back their sacred rights, which cannot be touched," he argued. "It is the individual right of every refugee, and no one can reach an agreement in this matter without his consent." To dispel any doubt about the nature of this "right," he emphasized that "the right of return means a return to Israel, not to a Palestinian state."

On the assumption that the elections scheduled for January 9 go as forecast, Abu Mazen's succession is thus no more likely to bring peace with Israel, or democracy to the Palestinians, than a new Germany would have been ushered in after World War II by the accession of one of Adolf Hitler's erstwhile lieutenants.

It is true that, during the past couple of years, Abu Mazen openly urged Arafat to scale down his war of terror and to return to the negotiating table. But this was a matter of tactics: Arafat himself had been amenable to negotiating so long as Israel proved sufficiently accommodating of his demands, while Abu Mazen never precluded a return to the "armed struggle" should circumstances so require. During his brief tenure as prime minister in 2003, he made no effort to disarm the numerous armed gangs in the territories as required by the Oslo accords, attempting instead to win their consent for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a temporary suspension of hostilities that would bring about an Israeli withdrawal, something the Palestinians had failed to achieve by military means.

For all their drastically different personalities and political style, Arafat and Abu Mazen are warp and woof of the same fabric: dogmatic PLO veterans who have never eschewed their commitment to Israel's destruction and who have viewed the "peace process" as the continuation of their lifetime war by other means. (A younger and more direct reincarnation of Arafat is Marwan Barghouti, the jailed Fatah terrorist with undisguised political ambitions.) As late as July 2002, Abu Mazen described Oslo as "the biggest mistake Israel ever made," enabling the PLO to get worldwide acceptance and respectability while hanging fast to its own aims. Shortly after Arafat's death this past November, in his address to a special session of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah, he swore to "follow in the path of the late leader Yasir Arafat and . . . work toward fulfilling his dream. . . . We promise you that our hearts will not rest until the right of return for our people is achieved and the tragedy of the refugees is ended."

One might have hoped that, eleven years and thousands of deaths after the launch of the Oslo process, the international community would pay closer attention to what the Palestinian leadership tells its own people and wider Arab constituencies. But that is evidently a hope too far. Even Bill Clinton, whose dream of brokering a Palestinian-Israeli peace was dashed by Arafat in the July 2000 Camp David summit and again in December of the same year, and who blamed the PLO leader for the collapse of the Oslo process, could suggest five months before Arafat's death that America and Israel had no choice but to resume negotiating with him. "Unless they . . . seriously believe they can find a better negotiating partner in Hamas," he told the British leftist daily *Guardian*, "then they need to keep working to make a deal."

It is precisely here that the great importance of the Bush Doctrine lies. For while the EU seems all too happy to continue asking nothing of the Palestinians, as if they were too dim or too primitive to be held accountable for their own actions, Bush has tackled the issue of accountability head on. In his correct perception, it is the total absence of this factor from Middle Eastern political life that has allowed a long succession of local dictators, from Gamal Abdel Nasser, to Saddam Hussein, to Yasir Arafat, to inflict recurrent disasters and endless suffering on their peoples, and mayhem upon the world.

So long as the Palestinian territories continue to be run by men of this kind and by their terrorist organizations, there can be no true or lasting reconciliation with Israel. And so long as the territories continue to be governed by Arafat's rule of the jungle, no Palestinian civil society, let alone a viable state, can develop. Just as the creation of free and democratic societies in Germany and Japan after World War II necessitated, above and beyond the overthrow of the ruling parties, a comprehensive purge of the existing political elites and the reeducation of the entire populace, so the Palestinians deserve a profound structural reform that will sweep the PA from power, free the territories from its grip, eradicate the endemic violence from political and social life, and teach the virtues of coexistence with their Israeli neighbors. Until this happens, there will be no lasting peace in the Middle East.

—December 1, 2004

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Americanism—and Its Enemies

David Gelernter

Anti-Americanism has blossomed frantically in recent years. Nearly the whole world seems to be pock-marked with lesions of hate. Some of this hatred focuses on George W. Bush, but much of it goes beyond the President to encompass the supposed evils of America and Americanism in general. In its passionate and unreasoning intensity, anti-Americanism resembles a religion—or a caricature of a religion. And this fact tells us something important about Americanism itself.

By Americanism I do not mean American tastes or style, or American culture—that convenient target of America-haters everywhere. Nor do I mean mere patriotic devotion; many nations command patriotic devotion from their citizens (or used to). By Americanism I mean the set of beliefs that are thought to constitute America's essence and to set it apart; the beliefs that make Americans positive that their nation is superior to all others—*morally* superior, closer to God.

Frenchmen used to think France superior on account of its culture and *civilisation*; many still do. Germans once thought they were smarter, deeper and (possibly) racially superior. Englishmen once considered themselves natural rulers and believed that their governmental structures set Britain on a higher plane. And so on. Not all nations have "isms," and not all those who do (or did) have been equally serious about their particular "ism." America has one and is dead serious about it.

Most national "isms" have seemed fearsome or hateful only insofar as they were militarily threatening. Communism was feared because of its power to foment internal subversion. In the late-18th and 19th centuries, America stood for radical republicanism and the breaking-down of inherited rank—grounds for hatred among much of the European elite. But over the last century or so, America has *remained* an object of hatred within nations that have themselves gone over to American-style democracy; has been hated by people who had nothing whatsoever to fear from American power. America, Winston Churchill said during World War II, was the great republic "whose power arouses no fear and whose pre-eminence excites no jealousy." Evidently this is no longer true.

Americanism is notable, of course, not merely for its spectacular ability to arouse hate. Over the roughly four centuries of American and proto-American existence, it has also inspired remarkable feats of devotion. You would need *some* sort of fierce determination to set forth in a puny, broad-beamed, high-pooped, painfully slow, nearly undefended 17th-century ship to cross the uncharted

David Gelernter *is a professor of computer science at Yale and the author of* Machine Beauty, Drawing Life, 1939, *and other books. His novella, "Swan House," appeared in our July-August 2004 issue; "Judaism Beyond Words," a five-part series, was published in 2002 and 2003. The present article, in different form, was given as a lecture sponsored by Susan and Roger Hertog in New York in October of last year.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ocean to an unknown, unmapped new world. You would need remarkable determination to push westward into the heartland away from settlement and safety. You would need ferocious bravado to provoke the dominant great power of the day on the basis of rather flimsy excuses, and ultimately to declare war and proclaim your independence. The Union side in the Civil War would have needed practically incandescent determination to keep fighting after the South had won decisive battles, slaughtered vast numbers of Union soldiers, and gained the sympathy of the two leading West European powers.

In the 20th century, you would have needed enormous determination to turn your back on the isolationism and anti-militarism that comes naturally to Americans and butt into World War I—and then, after World War II, to reject isolationism once again when you accepted the Soviet empire's challenge. Freedom and independence for Greece and Turkey—not exactly pressing American interests—occasioned America's entry into the cold war. And what on earth would make an Idaho or Nebraska farmer—that man about whom Tony Blair spoke so feelingly in his eloquent 2003 address to Congress—believe that it was his responsibility to protect the Iraqi people and the world from Saddam Hussein? What did all that have to do with *him*?

Americanism is potent stuff. It is every bit as fervent and passionate a religion as the anti-Americanism it challenges and rebukes.

II

THAT AMERICANISM *is* a religion is widely agreed. G.K. Chesterton called America "the nation with the soul of a church." But Americanism is not (contrary to the views of many people who use these terms loosely) a "secular" or a "civil" religion. No mere secular ideology, no mere philosophical belief, could possibly have inspired the intensities of hatred and devotion that Americanism has. Americanism is in fact a Judeo-Christian religion; a millenarian religion; a biblical religion. Unlike England's "official" religion, embodied in the Anglican church, America's has been incorporated into all the Judeo-Christian religions in the nation.

Does that make it impossible to believe in a secular Americanism? Can you be an agnostic or atheist or Buddhist or Muslim and a believing American too? In each case the answer is yes. But to accomplish that feat is harder than most people realize. The Bible is not merely the fertile soil that brought Americanism forth. It is the energy source that makes it live and thrive; that makes believing Americans willing to prescribe freedom, equality, and democracy even for a place like Afghanistan, once regarded as perhaps *the* remotest region on the face of the globe. If you undertake to remove Americanism from its native biblical soil, you had better connect it to some other energy source potent enough to keep its principles alive and blooming.

But is it not true that the Declaration of Independence—one of America's holiest writings—treats religion in a cool, Enlightenment sort of way? It does. But we ought to keep in mind an observation by the historian Ralph Barton Perry. The Declaration, Perry reminds us, was an *ex post facto* justification of American beliefs. It was addressed to educated elite opinion, especially abroad; it was designed to win arguments, not to capture the essence of Americanism as Americans themselves understood it. That essence emerges in the less guarded pronouncements of the Founding Fathers and many other leading exponents and prophets of Americanism, from Winthrop and Bradford through John Adams and Jefferson through Lincoln and Wilson, Truman, Reagan.

Few believing Americans can show, nowadays, how Americanism's principles are derived from the Bible. But many are willing to say that these principles *are* God-given. Freedom comes from God, George W. Bush has said more than once; and if you pressed him, I suspect you would discover that not only does he say it, he believes it. Many Americans all over the country agree with him. The idea of a "secular" Americanism based on the Declaration of Independence is an optical illusion.

III

SUPPOSE YOU were to put together a bookful of pronouncements and predictions about America's destiny, ranging over four centuries. What title would you give it?

Such an anthology did appear in 1971; it was edited by an associate professor of religious studies and subtitled "Religious Interpretations of American Destiny." The book's main title was *God's New Israel*. From the 17th century through John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Americans kept talking about their country as if it were the biblical Israel and they were the chosen people.

Where did that view of America come from? It came from Puritanism—Puritanism being not a separate type of Christianity but a certain approach to Protestantism. And here is a strange fact about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Puritanism. It originated in 16th-century England; it became one of the most powerful forces in religious if not all human history. It consistently elicited bitter hatred—and was directly responsible for (at least) two world-changing developments. It provoked the British Civil War (in which the Puritans and Parliament asserted their rights against the crown and the established church), and the first settlements by British religious dissenters in the new world.

And then it simply disappeared. In the late 1700's or early 1800's, Puritanism dropped out of history. Traces survived in Britain and (even more so) in America, in the form of churches once associated with it. But after the 18th century, we barely hear about Puritanism as a live force; before long everyone agrees that it is dead.

What happened to it? In a narrow sense, Puritan congregations sometimes liberalized and became Unitarian; the Transcendentalists, prominent in American literature from roughly 1820 through 1860, are often described as the spiritual successors of the Puritans. But Puritanism was too potent, too vibrant simply to vanish. Where did all that powerful religious passion go?

Puritanism had two main elements: the Calvinist belief in predestination with associated religious doctrines, and what we might call a "political" doctrine. The "political" goal of Puritanism was to reach back to the pure Christianity of the New Testament—and then even farther back. Puritans spoke of themselves as God's new chosen people, living in God's new promised land—in short, as God's new Israel.

I believe that Puritanism did *not* drop out of history. It transformed itself into Americanism. This new religion was the end-stage of Puritanism: Puritanism *realized* among God's self-proclaimed "new" chosen people—or, in Abraham Lincoln's remarkable phrase, God's "almost chosen people."

Many thinkers have noted that Americanism is inspired by or close to or intertwined with Puritanism. One of the most impressive scholars to say so recently is Samuel Huntington, in his formidable book on American identity, *Who Are We?* But my thesis is that Puritanism did not merely inspire or influence Americanism; it turned into Americanism. Puritanism and Americanism are not just parallel or related developments; they are two stages of a single phenomenon.

This is an unprovable proposition. But as a way of looking at things, it buys us something valuable. Consider: Puritanism was shared by people of many faiths, at any rate within Protestant Christianity. You could find Puritans in Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches, and in Baptist and Quaker churches; some Puritans never left the Episcopalian or Anglican church, and eventually you could find Puritans in Methodist churches, too. Later, as I have noted, you could even find them in Unitarian churches—despite Unitarianism's dramatic disagreements with other forms of Protestantism.

Americanism has these same peculiar properties, and takes them a step further. It, too, is a religion professed by people of many different faiths. Because of its "political" or biblical aspect, specifically its "Old Testament" focus, it was destined ultimately to be at home not merely in many kinds of Protestant churches but in *every* congregation that venerated the Hebrew Bible—in American Protestant churches, American Catholic churches, and American synagogues. This may seem like a strange set of attributes for a Judeo-Christian religion—yet Puritanism itself had the same attributes.

IV

IF AMERICANISM is the end-stage of political Puritanism, which in turn was the yearning to live in contact with God as a citizen of God's new Israel, what is its creed?

The idea of an "American creed" has been around for a long time. Huntington lists its elements as "liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property." I prefer a different formulation: a conceptual triangle in which one fundamental fact creates two premises that create three conclusions.

The fundamental fact: the Bible is God's word. Two premises: first, every member of the American community has his own individual dignity, insofar as he deals individually with God; second, the community has a divine mission to all mankind. Three conclusions: every human being everywhere is entitled to freedom, equality, and democracy.

In the American creed, both premises and all three conclusions refer back to the Bible, especially the Hebrew Bible. Americans have defined the "community" of the premises more and more broadly over the years, until it has grown to encompass the whole population of adult citizens—thus bringing the premises gradually into line with the universal conclusions. Today there is pressure to define the community more broadly still, so that it includes (for example) illegal as well as legal residents.

Freedom, equality, democracy: the Declaration held these truths to be self-evident, but "self-evi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dent" they were certainly *not*. Otherwise, America would hardly have been the first nation in history to be built on this foundation. Deriving all three from the Bible, theologians of Americanism understood these doctrines not as philosophical ideas but as the word of God. Hence the fervor and passion with which Americans believe their creed. Americans, virtually alone in the world, insist that freedom, equality, and democracy are right not only for France and Spain but for Afghanistan and Iraq.

V

HOW ARE the creed's three conclusions derived from the Bible? Freedom is the message of the Exodus, one of the Hebrew Bible's great underlying themes. Bible readers believed that the Exodus story predicted the fate of nations. The literary scholar David Jeffrey names three major works that "illustrate the power of the Exodus story in the formation of American national identity": Samuel Mather's *Figures and Types of the Old Testament* (1673), Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (a history of 17th-century New England, 1702), and Jeremiah Romayne's *The American Israel* (1795).

In 1777 Nicholas Street preached in East Haven, Connecticut:

> The British tyrant is only acting over the same wicked and cruel part, that Pharaoh king of Egypt acted toward the children of Israel some 3,000 years ago.

The same day the Declaration of Independence was adopted, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson were appointed as a committee to propose a seal for the brand-new United States. Given what we know about Americanism, it is hardly surprising that they suggested an image of Israel crossing the Red Sea and Moses lit by the pillar of fire, with the motto: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." (The seal was never adopted, but a copy of the recommendation survives in the papers of the Continental Congress.)

Next, equality. Equality was connected with Genesis—every man is created in God's image—and also with the powerful anti-monarchy message delivered by the prophet Samuel. Abraham Lincoln took the largest and most important step in American history toward putting this part of the creed into effect, and also gave the clearest exposition of its biblical roots. Citing the words of the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln said:

> This was [the Founding Fathers'] lofty, and wise, and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to His creatures. Yes, gentlemen, to *all* His creatures, to the whole great family of man. In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity.

A near-relative of Lincoln's argument appears in one of the first documents of colonial American history, Alexander Whitaker's *Good Newes From Virginia* of 1613. Whitaker urges that the Indians be well treated; after all, "One God created us, they have reasonable soules and intellectuall faculties as well as wee; we all have Adam for our common parent: yea, by nature the condition of us both is all one."

There is also a remarkable similarity between Lincoln's thought and a rabbinic midrash according to which a phrase in Genesis—"these are the archives of Adam's descendants"—is the single greatest statement in the Torah. Why? Because it teaches that all men, being descended from the same ancestors, are equal in dignity.

OF THE creed's three elements, democracy might seem the least likely to be traced back to biblical sources—but Americans of past ages knew the Bible much better than we do. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, often called the "first written constitution of modern democracy," were inspired not by democratic Athens or republican Rome or Enlightenment philosophy but by a Puritan preacher's interpretation of a verse in the Hebrew Bible. They were drafted in May 1638, in response to a sermon by Thomas Hooker before the general assembly in Hartford.

Hooker cited the biblical passage, "Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you" (Deuteronomy 1:13). This he interpreted to mean "that the choice of public magistrate belongs unto the people, by God's own allowance. . . . The foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people."

Hooker's interpretation was hardly novel or eccentric. Many preachers knew and believed the same thing. In 1780, roughly a century and a half after Hooker's epoch-making sermon, with the Revolutionary War under way, Pastor Simeon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Howard of Boston was pondering the new nation's government. He too decided—on the basis of this same passage, and of the classical Jewish historian Josephus—that America should be a democratic republic.

Howard's advice was as radical as it was straightforward, as avant-garde as it was Puritan, Bible-centered, and godly. "In compliance with the advice of Jethro," he preached,

> Moses chose able men, and made them rulers [over the Israelites in the desert]; but it is generally supposed that they were chosen *by the people* [emphasis added]. This is asserted by Josephus, and plainly intimated by Moses in his recapitulary discourse, recorded in the first chapter of Deuteronomy.

Historians have pointed out that the clergy wielded far more influence over the colonial public than a Tom Paine or John Locke did. In 1776, three-quarters of American citizens were Puritan. Puritans have long been classified as strait-laced, dour, and joyless, far from passionate revolutionaries or radical democrats. Like nearly all stereotypes, these are partly true—but they are a long way from the whole truth.

A recent Pew Research Center survey found that not even a third of American journalists have "a great deal of confidence" that the American electorate makes correct choices at the polls. The Puritans thought otherwise, and so did Abraham Lincoln. The historian William Wolf cites Lincoln's belief "that God's will is ultimately to be known *through* the people." Lincoln said: "I must trust in that Supreme Being who has never forsaken this favored land, through the instrumentality of this great and intelligent people." What chance is there that American journalists or professors or school-teachers would describe Americans today as "this great and intelligent people"?

VI

We can go further. To sum up Americanism's creed as freedom, equality, and democracy for all is to state only half the case. The other half deals with a promised land, a chosen people, and a universal, divinely ordained mission. This part of Americanism is the American version of biblical Zionism: in short, American Zionism.

The relation between Americanism and American Zionism is something like the relation between Anglicanism and Anglo-Catholicism. Anglo-Catholicism *is* Anglicanism, but the name was invented to underline the closeness between Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. The term "American Zionism" similarly underlines the closeness between Americanism and the biblical idea of a divinely chosen people and promised land.

When I say that Americanism equals American Zionism, I am in one sense merely adding up statements by eminent authorities. John Winthrop in 1630: "Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us." Thomas Jefferson in his Second Inaugural address: "I shall need . . . the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life." (The last phrase is an update of the Bible's "flowing with milk and honey.") Abraham Lincoln declared his wish to be a "humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty and of this, His almost chosen people."

Hundreds of other statements along the same lines might be gathered from the whole formative period of Americanism, from the early 1600's through the Civil War. Among the most striking is one of the earliest, from the famous journal of William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*. Once the Pilgrims had landed in the new world, Bradford writes, "What could now sustain them but the Spirit of God and His grace?" And he continues:

> May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: "Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in the wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice and looked on their adversity," etc.

Bradford is paraphrasing verses from Deuteronomy (26:5 ff.) that read (in the Geneva Bible of 1560, which Puritans preferred to the King James version): "A Syrian was my father, who being ready to perish for hunger, went downe into Egypte. . . . When we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voyce, & looked on our adversitie."

The Bible reports that the Israelites were instructed to speak these verses when they brought the year's first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem, there to recall publicly the Lord's gift of the promised land. Bradford was equating the arrival of Englishmen in Plymouth with the arrival of the wandering Israelites in the promised land. The same verses play a central role in the Haggadah recited by Jews on Passover to this day—although Bradford could not have known that. Showing an uncanny tendency to *think* like a Jew, he singled them out on his own, and put them at the center of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his own version of (what we might call) a Pilgrim seder.*

Evidently the historian Samuel Eliot Morison did not realize the Passover significance of these verses, either. His scrupulous edition of Bradford's journal is the scholarly standard, with plenty of footnotes—but none at this point. In other places where Bradford quotes or paraphrases the Hebrew Bible without giving a citation, it is not quite clear whether or not Morison has picked up the reference. Yet you cannot really understand the Pilgrims, or Puritans in general, unless you know the Hebrew Bible and classical Jewish history; knowing Judaism itself also helps. But people with this sort of basic knowledge have rarely bothered to study the Puritans, and those who study the Puritans have rarely bothered to know what the Puritans knew.

Early exponents of Americanism tended to define even their own *Christianity* in ways that make it sound like Judaism. Thus John Winthrop: "the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke [of angering the lord] and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah, to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God." Lincoln, a profoundly religious man, refused all his life to join a church. But he did make the celebrated assertion that he *would* join a church whose entire creed was "what our lord said were the two great commandments, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and my neighbor as myself." He was referring to the Gospel passage in which Jesus cites these two verses from the Hebrew Bible as the essence of Christianity.

I do not claim that Lincoln, Winthrop, and Bradford were crypto-Jews. They were not. The point is that classical Israel's (and classical Zionism's) contribution to Americanism is incalculable. No modern historian or thinker I am aware of—not Huntington or Morison or Perry or Mead or Perry Miller or even Martin Marty or Sydney Ahlstrom—has done justice to this extraordinary fact. They seem to have forgotten what the eminent 19th-century Irish historian William Lecky recognized: that "Hebraic mortar cemented the foundations of American democracy." And even Lecky, I suspect, did not grasp the full extent of this truth. Unless we do grasp it, we can never fully understand Americanism—or anti-Americanism.

VII

THERE HAVE been at least four crucial turning points—"climacterics," Churchill would have called them—at which Americans spoke explicitly and simultaneously about the religious content and the world mission of Americanism. The first was when the colonies declared their independence. Here is Dr. Banfield, in 1783:

> 'Twas [God] who raised a Joshua to lead the tribes of Israel in the field of battle; raised and formed a Washington to lead on the troops of his chosen States. 'Twas He who in Barak's day spread the spirit of war in every breast to shake off the Canaanitish yoke, and inspired thy inhabitants, O America!

In 1799, with the Great Republic safely established, Abiel Abbot delivered a Thanksgiving sermon:

> It has been often remarked that the people of the United States come nearer to a parallel with Ancient Israel, than any other nation upon the globe. Hence OUR AMERICAN ISRAEL is a term frequently used; and our common consent allows it apt and proper.

Washington's early biographer Jared Sparks quotes him to the effect that "there never was a people who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs than those of the United States."

The second climacteric was the Civil War. Lincoln's understanding of that conflict, writes Edmund Wilson, "grew out of the religious tradition of the New England theology of Puritanism." In 1862, Lincoln made "a solemn vow before God" to free the South's slaves. William Wolf notes that this vow was "more in conformance with Old Testament than with New Testament religion," was "imbedded in Lincoln's biblical piety," and "came to him as part of the religious heritage of the nation." The "climactic expression of his biblical faith," according to Wolf, was the Second Inaugural address:

> It reads like a supplement to the Bible. In it there are fourteen references to God, four direct quotations from Genesis, Psalms, and Matthew, and other allusions to scriptural teaching.

"We can appreciate even in these few words," writes Sidney Ahlstrom of the Second Inaugural, "the astounding profundity of this self-educated child of the frontier, this son of a Hard-shell Baptist who never lost hold of the proposition that na-

* One day, it seems to me, there will be a Thanksgiving Haggadah for Americans to recite at the national holiday Lincoln proclaimed. I have in mind an actual document telling the story of Puritan sufferings in England; of America's birth; of the bloody Civil War struggle to realize the creed's promises; of repeated re-enactments of the Exodus that make up America's history—interspersed with passages from the English Bible. This is a project I'm at work on myself.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions and men are instruments of the Almighty." If Americanism is a religion, this is its holiest document after the Bible and the Declaration; and Lincoln is its greatest prophet.

WORLD WAR I marked the third turning point: America stepped forward to assume its role as a world power. It happened under President Woodrow Wilson, the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers.

Many people found Wilson hard to take. At the end of his career, on his return from negotiations in Paris at the close of the war, he went down in flames—shot out of the sky like the Red Baron by a Senate and nation unwilling to join the League of Nations, which Wilson had more or less invented, or ratify the Treaty of Versailles, which he championed.

Yet Wilson stands right at the center of classical Americanism. No President spoke the language of Bible and divine mission more lucidly. His First Inaugural address was composed in pure and perfect American, Lincoln-inspired:

> The nation has been deeply stirred by a solemn passion, stirred by the knowledge of wrong, of ideals lost, of government too often debauched and made an instrument of evil. The feelings with which we face this new age of right and opportunity sweep across our heartstrings like some air out of God's own presence, where justice and mercy are reconciled and the judge and the brother are one.

During Wilson's administration, Americanism accomplished a fundamental transition. It had always included the idea of divine mission. But what *was* the mission? Until the closing of the frontier in the last decade of the 19th century, the mission was to populate the continent. With the frontier closed, the mission became "Americanism for the whole world." Of this transition, the historian William Leuchtenberg writes:

> The United States believed that American moral idealism could be extended outward, that American Christian democratic ideals could and should be universally applied. . . . The culmination of a long political tradition of emphasis on sacrifice and decisive moral combat, the [world] war was embraced as that final struggle where the righteous would do battle for the Lord.

In his speech asking for a declaration of war, Wilson told Congress that "The world must be made safe for democracy"—a much-ridiculed phrase, and one that captures perfectly America's sense of obligation to spread its own way of life and its own good fortune. In another speech, this one explaining American war aims and intended for German consumption, Wilson concluded with these words about America: "God helping her, she can do no other." The historian Mark Sullivan comments:

> Probably not one in a hundred of his American hearers recognized that paraphrase of Martin Luther's declaration, immortal to every German Lutheran, "*Ich kann nicht anders*" (I can do no other).

And so we circle back to the beginnings of Protestantism, which begot Puritanism, which begot Americanism.

The final climacteric was the cold war—its start and its finish. Franklin D. Roosevelt had taken the United States into World War II, but stubbornly refused to accept Churchill's diagnosis of Stalin as a ruthless imperialist. His successor, Harry Truman, followed FDR's path—at first. But in 1946 Truman changed course dramatically. When Britain was no longer able to prop up the non-Communist governments of Greece and Turkey, Truman decided that the U.S. must take over that soon-to-lapse commitment. He announced the Truman Doctrine. From then on, the Soviets would no longer be allowed unlimited scope for their imperialist ambitions; the United States had decided to get into the game.

Truman's announcement was in the spirit of classical Americanism. It recognized America's message and duty to all mankind:

> I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure. . . . The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms.

Although historians often skip over this point, Truman's world-view centered on the Bible nearly to the extent Lincoln's had. By his own account, he had read through the Bible three times by age fourteen; he read it through seven times more during the years of his presidency. It shaped his understanding of the American enterprise. Truman makes this remarkable comment in his *Memoirs*: "What came about in Philadelphia in 1776 really had its beginning in Hebrew times."

The end of the cold war was presided over by Ronald Reagan, who returns us (once again) to the nation's beginning. In one of his best-remembered phrases, Reagan declared that America was and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must always be the "shining city upon a hill." John Winthrop had conceived this idea aboard the *Arabella* bound for Massachusetts Bay in 1630. The phrase goes back to Matthew ("Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid"), and indirectly to the prophet Isaiah ("In the end of days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and many nations shall flow unto it"). Reagan's use of these words connected modern America to the humane Christian vision—the Puritan vision—the vision (ultimately) of the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish people—that created this nation.

VIII

SOME AGREED with Ronald Reagan and some disagreed. Some approved of him and some disapproved. Yet, to a remarkable extent, those who *hated* him are the ones who hate America—for many of the same religion-mocking reasons that made them ridicule Woodrow Wilson.

The great British economist John Maynard Keynes had this to say regarding Wilson's behavior at the Paris Peace Conference: "Now it was that what I have called his theological or Presbyterian temperament became dangerous." Wilson's idealistic peace plan—the "Fourteen Points"—became, according to Keynes, "a document for gloss and interpretation and for all the intellectual apparatus of self-deception, by which, I daresay, the President's forefathers had persuaded themselves that the course they thought it necessary to take was consistent with every syllable of the Pentateuch."

The British diplomat Harold Nicholson concurred. He described Wilson as "the descendant of Covenanters, the inheritor of a more immediate Presbyterian tradition. That spiritual arrogance which seems inseparable from the harder forms of religion had eaten deep into his soul."

The same type of accusation would be directed at Ronald Reagan. On the occasion of his "evil empire" speech, for example, the columnist Mary McGrory called Reagan's denunciation of the Soviet Union "a marvelous parody of a revivalist minister." Another journalist, Colman McCarthy, wrote that Reagan had descended "to the level of Ayatollah Khomeini"—to the level, that is, of an enemy of mankind who uses religion to do evil.

That Americanism is the successor of Puritanism is crucial to anti-Americanism. In the 18th century, anti-Americans were conservative, monarchist anti-Puritans. (Boswell reports Samuel Johnson's announcement that "I am willing to love all mankind, *except an American*.") In the 19th century, European elites became increasingly hostile to Christianity—which inevitably entailed hostility to America. In modern times, anti-Americanism is closely associated with anti-Christianism *and* anti-Semitism.*

Anti-Americans are still fascinated and enraged by Americans' bizarre tendency to believe in God. In the months before the Iraq war in spring 2003, a Norwegian demonstrator waved a placard reading, "Will Bush Go to Hell?" An expatriate American wrote recently (for the *FrontPage* website) of being instructed by Londoners that "the United States is one giant fundamentalist Christian nation peopled by raging Bible-thumpers on every street"; that America is "running wild with religious extremism that threatens the world far more than bin Laden."

And we needn't go to Norway or Britain to find angry denunciations of President Bush and the Americans who support him in religion-mocking terms. The President's faith, said one prominent American politician in September 2004, is "the American version of the same fundamentalist impulse that we see in Saudi Arabia, in Kashmir, and in many religions around the world."

The speaker was former Vice President Al Gore. His comments were offensive and false. Today's radical Islam is a religion of death, a religion that rejoices in slaughter. The radical Christianity known as Puritanism insisted on choosing life. Americanism does, too.

Puritans took to heart these famous words from the Hebrew Bible: "I have set before you this day life and death, blessing and curse: therefore choose life and live, you and your children" (Deuteronomy 30:19). On board the *Arabella*, John Winthrop closed his famous meditation of 1630 by citing that verse from Deuteronomy, centering his words on the page for emphasis:

> Therefore let us choose life
> that wee, and our Seede,
> may live; by obeying his
> voice, and cleaveing to him,
> for hee is our life, and
> our prosperity.

No Saudi fanatic, no Kashmiri fanatic could have written those words. John Winthrop was a founder of this nation; we are his heirs; and we ought to thank God that we have inherited his humanitarian decency along with his radical, God-fearing Americanism.

* It has been many centuries since Christians in the West have been routine objects of organized hatred; they do not even have a word for it. But they had better find one.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Is Cynthia Ozick About?

Hillel Halkin

THE FIRST to have ventured, Cynthia Ozick remains in a class by herself.

It was in 1966 that she published, in the relatively obscure *Hudson Review*, her story "The Pagan Rabbi"; in 1969 that "Envy; or, Yiddish in America" caused a stir when it appeared in COMMENTARY. (To give a lesser but then more popular novelist his due, between those two years Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, a novel about an ultra-Orthodox yeshiva boy in New York City, became a national best-seller.) These stories demonstrated what now seems so obvious that it is hard to fathom what took so long, or why more writers did not take up the challenge immediately—namely, that it was possible to write important American Jewish fiction from *within*.

Today, with the work of Allen Hoffman, Allegra Goodman, Rebecca Goldstein, Nessa Rappaport, Jonathan Rosen, Dara Horn, Nathan Englander, Aryeh Lev Stollman, and still others who write well and un-self-consciously about lives engaged with Jewishness, one has to remind oneself that, oddly enough, such lives were once considered infra dig for post-World War II "American Jewish" literature. As late as the 1980's, this literature's proper perspective was thought to be on the outside, looking back or in. Jewishness as remembered childhood; as outgrown parochialism; as lost patrimony; as ethnic burlesque; as black comedy; as other- or self-inflicted victimhood; as the natural habitat of the neurotic and the schlemiel; as existential burden or tragic fate; as refined moral sensibility, ironic critical detachment, exile, alienation, marginality, the symbolic state of Everyman—as anything but a knowledgeable involvement in a living Jewish tradition and community—was what American Jewish fiction was about.

"The Pagan Rabbi" broke with all this. Although not exactly an affirmation of Judaism (its rabbi, an admired young talmudic scholar, shocks its narrator by becoming a worshiper of sprites and nature spirits and then killing himself), it was written from a place that no mere escapee from or voyeur of Judaism could have occupied. And it was for this reason also a Jewish puzzle, since it never made clear either its author's judgment of her narrator, a deserter from Judaism married to a Gentile, or its narrator's judgment of the rabbi, a childhood friend who inspires in him the pity and terror that, so Aristotle said, is the natural reaction to true tragedy.

Four decades have gone by since the publication of "The Pagan Rabbi," and Ozick, as evinced by her latest novel, *Heir to the Glimmering World*,* continues to puzzle while having become, besides one of the most distinguished fiction writers of her age, a formidably intelligent essayist and literary critic, and a fearless defender of the Jews and the state of Israel

HILLEL HALKIN *is a regular contributor to* COMMENTARY *and a columnist for the* Jerusalem Post *and the* New York Sun. *His new book,* A Strange Death, *will be published by Public Affairs in May.*

* Houghton Mifflin, 320 pp., $24.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against their detractors. It is as fiction writer and essayist together, indeed, that she puzzles the most, since the same essays that illuminate her fiction throw their shadow over it. If *Heir to the Glimmering World* is a novel that Ozick the essayist helps us to understand better, it is also a novel that makes us ask what the relationship between Ozick the essayist and Ozick the novelist is.

ALTHOUGH NOTHING, as the narrator of Ozick's story "Usurpation" observes, is more tedious than plot summary, a synopsis of *Heir to the Glimmering World* conveys why it has seemed a strange book to some reviewers.

In 1935, a young upstate New Yorker, an eighteen-year-old named Rosie Meadows, goes to work for a family of refugees from Hitler who are, like her, not noticeably Jewish Jews. Rosie is an orphan, having lost her mother when she was young and more recently her father, a ne'er-do-well schoolteacher, and when an older cousin she has been staying with in Albany moves in with his Communist girlfriend, she lands a sleep-in job with the Mitwissers.

Newly arrived in America, the Mitwissers consist of Professor Rudolf Mitwisser, an internationally recognized scholar of the Karaites, a medieval Jewish sect that rejected the interpretative traditions of the rabbis in favor of a biblical literalism; his wife Elsa, a nuclear physicist and former colleague of the great Erwin Schrödinger, now sunk in a having-to-start-all-over-again depression; and their children, a psychologically stunted little girl, three rambunctious boys, and—mature beyond her years—the teenage Annaliese. Although Rosie thinks she has been hired to look after the children and Mrs. Mitwisser, it is Annaliese who runs the household. Rosie's real job, she finds out while learning to negotiate the family's various intrigues and alliances, is to be a typist for the professor, a monomaniacal scholar with a temporary post at a local college and a passion for his subject that few people share.

Before long the Mitwissers, who have a mysterious if irregular source of income, move to the Bronx. Rosie accompanies them and a new character appears, the mysterious source of income himself. He is James A'Bair, Jr., the son of the late author-illustrator James Philip A'Bair, creator of "the Bear Boy," the much-beloved, Christopher Robin-like hero of a series of popular children's books. James, the Bear Boy's original model, is no longer the darling child in bangs and short pants made rich and famous by his father but a hard-drinking drifter who has spent his adult life fleeing the cuddlesome image bestowed on him. Something about the Mitwissers, first met in a rooming house in Albany, attracts him; something links him to the professor and his Karaites. (Something also links him to Rosie, who happens to possess, by a freak accident, the immensely valuable copy of the first *Bear Boy* off the press, won by her father from James in an improvised game of craps.)

Heir to the Glimmering World advances slowly, its progress delayed by the mysteries that block its way and must be dismantled. Rosie corresponds with her cousin Bertram, on whom she has a crush; his Communist girlfriend goes off to fight in Spain and is killed. Mrs. Mitwisser is revealed to have had a secret affair with Schrödinger, the father of one of her three sons. James and Annaliese fall in love and elope. Professor Mitwisser works feverishly on his grand opus; excitedly discovers that a leading Karaite, "descend[ing] into the labyrinth of renunciation," had concluded that man, God's would-be interpreter, is despised by his Creator; yet then, his findings unpublishable because a key document is missing, falls into a melancholia of his own, loses interest in his work, and grows old and enfeebled. James commits suicide, leaving Annaliese pregnant. Bertram moves in with the Mitwissers, assumes Annaliese's nurturing role, and courts and marries her. James's lawyers award the A'Bair fortune to Annaliese's baby. Rosie packs and leaves. We last see her on the novel's last page, stepping into a cab with her bags.

Karaites? A Bear Boy? What's it about?

ONE COULD say—there are literary critics who say it—that literature is not *about* anything. It simply *is*, like life itself, and no more owes us meanings than do otters or oak trees. Rosie, the Mitwissers, and the Bear Boy exist because Cynthia Ozick the novelist has breathed life into them; substitute our words for hers, and they die.

This is, however, a point of view that Ozick the essayist will have none of. Repeatedly in her writings she has attacked the dogma, associated with the "New Criticism" that came to be a 20th-century orthodoxy, that literature need only "be," not "mean." From a Jewish perspective, she has written, this is "idolatrous," because "When art is put in competition, like a god, with the Creator, it too is turned into an idol. . . . [T]he chief characteristic of any idol is that it is a system sufficient to itself." Literature resists "idolatry" by inviting interpretation, exegesis. "The writers who claim that fiction is self-referential, that what a story is about is the language it is made out of," Ozick has declared,

> willingly sit in the dark, like the strict-constructionist Karaites who, wanting to observe the Sab-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> bath exactly, sat in the lampless black and the fireless cold on the very day that is most meant to resemble Paradise. The misuse of the significance of language by writers who most intend to celebrate the comeliness of language is like the misuse of the Sabbath by the fundamentalist Karaites: both annihilate the thing they hope to glorify.

The Karaites! *If Heir to the Glimmering World* is to be interpreted, its author has left us the key. She has in fact left it in three places, having written, early in her career, three different essays that refer to those medieval sectarians—"papa's people," as Annaliese calls them—who thought a perfect Torah needed no commentary.

In the earliest of these essays, "Toward a New Yiddish," delivered as an address in Jerusalem in 1970, Ozick declared in an attack on the New Criticism: "[The] New Critics . . . were largely Christian Karaites who would allow no tradition to be attached to a text. The history, psychology, even the opinions of a writer were declared irrelevant to the work and its word." Let us then bring to bear the history, psychology, and opinions of the writer to interpret *Heir to the Glimmering World*.

"Karaism" for Ozick is less a chapter in Jewish history than a metaphor for the rejection of history—for the contention that the highest human experience is the pristine encounter with an uninterpreted reality, with the "original self" and the "here and now." This, she holds, is a belief inimical to Judaism, a religion based on memory, historical accretion, and the recognition that the present is but the past's furthest thrust into time. To be blinded by the flash of eternity, "abjuring all that is not essence" like Professor Mitwisser's Karaites, is a dazzling experience, but, prolonged beyond the mystical moment, it is an impoverishing illusion, there being no original self to return to. The here and now caps the vector of the there and then.

Both Rudolf Mitwisser and James A'Bair, the Bear Boy, are metaphorical Karaites, James by virtue of his revolt against a father who has imposed on him an identity he did not choose. ("He was not a normal boy," we are told, "he was his father's drawing, his father's discourse, his father's exegesis of a boy. . . . [H]is father had interpreted him for the world.") Having taken to the whisky-and-hash-sodden road in search of his "real" self, the Bear Boy is drawn to Rudolf Mitwisser instinctively. ("It's not old that counts for Rudi, it's throwing things over," James says to Rosie. "He's got appetite; he's out to upset the apple cart.") Yet he also grasps, in his fashion, the professor's project. ("It was impossible," Annaliese reflects, "to think that James would care about papa's people, they were so old and long-ago; but one day he took off his glasses . . . and said that sometimes he nearly felt like one of them.") The two men are bound by a common cause.

Undone by it, too. Mitwisser is left with a worthless discovery, unprovable and impossible to live by. ("It is all in vain, in vain," he tells Rosie. What is the point of being a creature God hates?) James, after thinking he has ditched the Bear Boy at last by gambling away "the wonderful book" and becoming "nakedly himself, without a lace collar," despairingly realizes that the book has pursued him and there is no escape from the son his father made him. ("He had buried the Bear Boy, and among the Mitwissers the ghost had risen.") Both are foiled in getting back to "pure essence."

Is James to be read as the symbol of the anti-Jew—the idolater, the Karaite, the Christian, the New Critic, the New Age enthusiast, the Jew who wishes he were not born one? All of these, as Ozick put it in another of her "Karaite" essays, "Literature as Idol: Harold Bloom" (originally published as "Judaism and Harold Bloom" in Commentary, January 1979), are engaged in "the usurpation of an inheritance by the inheritor himself." And if, as it would appear, James stands for all of them, then, odd as it may seem, his father James Philip A'Bair—a father who endows a child with a priceless legacy that is perceived by the child as constraint, confinement, denied essence, a lace collar to be worn while the other boys wear comfortable play clothes—must be read as a symbol of Judaism.

And what of Rosie, of whom an intelligent reviewer, frustrated because she is "singularly difficult to pin down as a narrator," has complained that her tone is "almost affectless"? Surely, that is an unfair description of prose—its rhythms and choice of words as flawless as Ozick's nearly always are—like this:

> The Karaites. I begin to see them, dimly, dimly, passing shadows, remote echoes, grayly trudging on the farthest rim of history, the other side of history, the underside. They are inked letters seeping through the backs of the pages of old chronicles: faint glyphs glimmering, just visible, an inside-out alphabet.

Rosie departs, stepping into a taxi, the "wonderful book" in her hand. She too is an heir to the glimmering world, though she may not yet be aware of it.

Clearly, however, there is something wrong with reading a novel in such a paraphrastic, reductionist way. If a work of fiction can be boiled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down to its ideas and symbols, who needs fiction? (The narrator of Ozick's "Usurpation," presented as an author herself, does not even want unboiled ideas. "I hate stories with ideas hidden in them," she says.) Let us have essays and be done with it.

Fiction *is* like life insofar as talking about it and experiencing it are two different things, and the literary criticism of fiction, which is the talking about this experience, must begin with the experience itself. And we do not experience James A'Bair as an idea. We experience him as a force, elemental and chaotic. Here is Rosie's first glimpse of him, unexpectedly appearing at the Mitwissers' in a heavy rainstorm:

> He was not young; neither was he old. He was a ragged sort of fellow. If I had met him in the street I would have taken him for a vagrant and given him a wide berth; I would have dreaded the accidental touch of his sleeve. When his cap was off a heap of black hair went tumbling over the streaming lenses of his glasses; impossible to see his eyes behind all that water. A vagrant; a vagabond; a man with a knapsack and no socks. . . .
>
> The boys were all over him, an onslaught of boys, climbing and slapping and screeching and punching and squeezing; they were squeezing him dry, his feet spurted puddles, a geyser of laughter splashed up. Laughter! . . .
>
> "Who, I'm being throttled there. Hank, get off my neck, dammit! Bill! Hey! Unhand those primates, Rudi, can't you?" He was thrashing like a wild man, roaring; he had called Mitwisser Rudi, which was unimaginable. In this house of rules, he had no rules.

James is unruly with life. We react to him not like the critical Rosie but like the de-inhibited Mitwissers—as a relief, a breath of fresh air, a knocking down of the walls that separate them from each other and from us. Often in Ozick's fiction, indeed, the characters that intellectually seem most designed to be repudiated are the ones to whom, experientially, we are most drawn. They capture our sympathies in ways, we suspect, that Ozick the essayist might not approve of.

Take the "pagan rabbi," Isaac Kornfeld, for example. Condemned by his wise and embittered widow Sheindel, who cannot forgive either his suicide or his bizarre sexual infatuation with an imagined nymph in a city park, he is an "abomination" for her. Yet though paganism is never a positive thing in Ozick's essays, her story gives Kornfeld a deranged sublimity whose wild, mad beauty makes Sheindel's commonsense scorn palely inadequate.

Or the cynically anarchic Nicholas Tilbeck in the early novel, *Trust* (1966)—a long and tortoise-paced work of fiction in which, in an epigonic imitation of the young Ozick's literary hero Henry James, the narrative creeps by insinuation, indirection, and enigma along slow and exquisitely calibrated rails until, toward its end, Tilbeck and a henchwoman, a waterspout of words named Mrs. Purse, hijack and make off with it. These final pages (there are readers, unfortunately, who will give up before reaching them) contain some of the most astonishing bravura writing in contemporary American prose; their explosion of energy has a sulfurous smell.

Tilbeck is, like James A'Bair, a drifter, a charmer, a seducer, a merciless egotist who, in his unconcern for the consequences of his actions even to himself, can seem as egoless as a speeding car. He, too, is a suicide at the novel's end and is involved in a quest for true origins, although in his case he himself is its object. This is the quest for her father by Tilbeck's illegitimate daughter, *Trust*'s narrator, a young woman raised by a bohemian Wasp mother and a Jewish stepfather, a morally earnest and intellectually gnomic diplomat who is up for an ambassadorial appointment.

Despite the havoc they wreak, James and Tilbeck, like Falstaff in *Henry IV*, steal the show with their vitality. They remind one of William Blake's astute comment on Milton that the poet who made the Devil the most active and interesting character in *Paradise Lost* was "of the Devil's party" without knowing it.

WHOEVER'S PARTY the author of *Heir to the Glimmering World* is of, the play of real and imagined identities found there and in *Trust* is her fiction's most dominant theme. We find it in *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1988), whose protagonist, a Swedish book reviewer, convinces himself that he is the illegitimate son of the Polish Jewish author Bruno Schulz and encounters a rival claiming to be Schulz's daughter. It is generationally reversed in *The Shawl* (1980), in which an elderly Holocaust survivor fantasizes that her daughter, killed as a child by the Nazis, is alive in America. In *The Puttermesser Papers* (1998), a woman literally creates a daughter by modeling her from earth and breathing life into her. The competing authors of "Usurpation" dizzyingly steal each other's stories like boys playing salujee in a schoolyard. "Some filch their fiction from life, others filch their lives from fiction," the story's narrator says with a wink, if not of approbation, at least of authorial connivance.

Ozick the novelist is preoccupied by how we tell stories not just to make things up, but to make our-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves up. Like the Bear Boy, we want to be characters in our own, not someone else's, narrative. But there are only so many narratives available. Therefore, to quote a parody of the critic Harold Bloom in "Usurpation," "all stories are rip-offs. Shakespeare stole his plots. Dostoyevsky dug them out of the newspaper. Everybody steals."

Everybody? Not so, retorts Ozick the essayist. *Almost* everybody. The Jew alone, by handing down the only story never stolen because told by the only truly original Book, avoids plagiarism. All literature vies with the Bible. "The idol-maker envies the Creator, hopes to compete with the Creator, and schemes to invent a substitute for the Creator; and thereby becomes satanic and ingrown." But the Jew is different. He does not traffic in identities; he takes his preassigned place in a religious and moral tradition. In Judaism, "there is no competition with the text, no power struggle with the original, no envy of the Creator. The aim, instead, is to reproduce a purely transmitted inheritance, free of substitution." Although this inheritance is interpretative, treating the Book as inexhaustibly meaningful, "its interpretation never came to stand for disjunction, displacement, ebbing-out, isolation, swerving, deviation, substitution, revisionism. Transmittal signifies the carrying-over of the original strength, the primal monotheistic insight."

Ozick the essayist goes further. She asks whether the very idea of a Jewish writer of fiction may not be "what rhetoricians call an 'oxymoron'—a pointed contradiction, in which one arm of the phrase clashes so profoundly with the other as to annihilate it." The novelist creates by the power of the imagination, an inherently amoral force. This force, she writes in her third "Karaite" essay, "Innovation and Redemption: What Literature Means" (1982),

> is more than make-believe, more than the power to invent. It is also the power to penetrate evil, to take on evil, to become evil, and in that guise it is the most frightening human faculty. Whoever writes a story that includes villainy enters into and becomes the villain. . . . The imagination seeks out the unsayable and the undoable, and says and does them. And still more dangerous: the imagination always has the lust to tear down meaning, to smash interpretation, to wear out the rational, to mock the surprise of redemption . . . to transfix and stun rather than to urge; to spill out, with so much quicksilver wonder, idol after idol.

It is the imagination, unleashed and no longer answerable to moral judgment, that gives us a Falstaff, a Satan, a Tilbeck, a Kornfeld, a Bear Boy. Their stories seduce us without our knowing it. It is not only pulp fiction and TV that corrupts our minds and desires; they can also be corrupted by Shakespeare and Milton—indeed, the finest minds and the noblest desires can be corrupted by Shakespeare and Milton most of all. And also by Cynthia Ozick the novelist.

In all three of her "Karaite" essays, Ozick asks whether a Jew can in good conscience even be a novelist. (She does not bother to say "a religious Jew," for she believes that "the secular Jew is a figment; when a Jew becomes a secular person he is no longer a Jew.") "If there *can* be such a chimera as a 'Jewish writer'" of fiction, she writes in "Literature As Idol," it must be a "kind of sphinx or gryphon (part one thing, part another), . . . sometimes purifying like Abraham, more often conjuring like [Abraham's legendarily idol-making father] Terah, and always knowing that the two are icily, elegiacally, at war."

These strike us at first glance as outrageous hyperboles. A secular Jew is not a Jew? But scarcely a Jewish character in Ozick's own fiction is religiously observant. A Jew who writes novels is at war with himself? But what Jewish novelist of our times besides Ozick has reported from this battleground? So outrageous, that we are inclined to take them as rhetorical provocations, meant more to shock than to be taken at face value.

There is indeed only one other case in modern literature of a major novelist expressing such principled misgivings about his craft, and he was not a Jew but the born-again Christian author of *War and Peace*—the difference being that Tolstoy wrote his *What Is Art?* late in life while Ozick's "Karaite" essays were written with her best work still ahead of her. Perhaps, then, just as *What Is Art?* has been dismissed as the crankiness of an old writer whose powers were failing, these essays by Ozick should be understood as the nervousness of a younger one setting out. Always better to fail, if one must, in the name of principle! Ever since her reputation as a novelist has been established, at any rate, we have heard no more from Ozick the essayist about the conflict inherent in being a Jewish writer.

Yet the conflict, even if subsequently overcome, was real to her. Like Tolstoy's, its context was a conversion. As she declared in "Toward a New Yiddish":

> Until very recently my whole life was given over to the religion of Art, which is the religion of the Gentile nations—I had no other aspiration, no other commitment, was zealous for no other creed. . . . When at last I wrote a huge novel I meant it to be a Work of Art—but as the years ground through that labor, it turned, amazingly and horribly, into a curse. I discovered at the end

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> that I had cursed the world I lived in, grain by grain. And I did not know why. Furthermore, that immense and silent and obscure labor had little response—my work did not speak to the Gentiles, for whom it had been begun, nor to the Jews, for whom it had been finished.

The "huge novel" was *Trust*, about which Ozick's closing comment is curious, since the characters who run away with its ending are Gentile to the core. If *Trust* was begun "for the Gentiles" as a Jamesian icon of "the religion of Art," how was it finished "for the Jews"? By Nicholas Tilbeck's suicide? Or perhaps by the surprising disclosure on its last page that the narrator's stepfather, his State Department career in unexpected ruins, has exchanged it for a penitential life of talmudic study?

In any case, an apostate from the "religion of Art" is what Cynthia Ozick decided to be—not an American Jewish writer of fiction, but an American writer of Jewish fiction. Yet, perhaps because she was the first, she did not, like those who came after her, find the idea of Jewish fiction self-evident.

Nor, from the perspective of Judaism, should it be. Historically, after all, the rabbis never approved of, let alone saw the need for, an independent Jewish imaginative literature. The Jews possessed the Story of Stories; they did not require additional stories other than continuations or expositions of the first one. Midrash, tales of the great rabbis, hasidic legends—these were accepted, even revered; anything beyond them was grudgingly tolerated or rejected. Although pre-modern Hebrew literature had its own secular "novel," the medieval rhymed-prose *maqama* or *mahberet*, which began as an imitation of an Arabic genre and carried over into Europe, the manuscripts of it that once circulated widely wound up eventually in synagogue attics and Christian libraries. Tradition had no use for them.

To the modern Jewish mind, this seems a cause for regret: how much the Jews lost by not having their own Chrétien de Troyes, their own Chaucer! How much they gained in modern times by having a Kafka, a Babel, a Schulz, a Joseph Roth, a Henry Roth, a Philip Roth!

But this regret, the author of the "Karaite" essays might have pointed out, comes from an enthrallment to the religion of Art. To the mind of the apostate from that tradition, literature—*Jewish* literature—must express "the moral life." It must have a "corona of moral purpose: not outright in the grain of the fiction itself, but in the form of a faintly incandescent envelope around it." Granted, Ozick the essayist conceded, there is a danger in such an insistence; the "vulgar advocacy of an 'affirmative' literature in order to fulfill a moral mandate" is opposed to "the freedom inherent in storytelling"; a story must go its free, uncensored way. Yet what springs uncensored from the imagination demands a morally interpretable "nimbus of meaning." The morally uninterpretable story is Karaitic.

Which brings us back to *Heir to the Glimmering World*.

THE NARRATOR of "Usurpation" professes to hate ideas. But works of fiction, "Usurpation" included, often start with them. Whenever it was that Cynthia Ozick first thought of using it as a metaphor in her fiction, Karaism was in her mind since at least 1970—not nearly as long as *Winnie the Pooh*, a book presumably read to her as a child as it was to millions of children. Perhaps some of these children wondered what it was like to grow up as the real Christopher Robin; none, it can be safely assumed, connected him with a medieval Jewish heresy. The moment these two things fused as an idea in Ozick's mind, *Heir to the Glimmering World* was conceived.

What does an author normally do with such an idea? She seeks to hide it—in characters, in situations, in a plot—while leaving enough of it unconcealed for the reader to follow its trail. She invents Rudolf Mitwisser, single-minded and domineering, yet so fragile that he breaks by the end of the book; she invents the childish but shrewd Mrs. Mitwisser (no need to invent Schrödinger); she invents the Mitwisser children; she invents Rosie (not out of whole cloth: subtract two or three years from the shyly intelligent, prodigiously observant young woman who—shrinking into corners, resenting being in them, and prone to unrequited crushes—narrates *Trust*, and Rosie is already half there); she invents a grown-up Christopher Robin; she throws them together and lets the imagination go to work.

The imagination works. At first James is kept out of sight. It takes 87 pages to introduce him in person. Perhaps Ozick the novelist and Ozick the essayist are arguing about him behind the scenes. The latter cannot want him to be too appealing. But at last he does appear and he is appealing, magnetically so; everyone loves him except Rosie, who remains cautiously neutral, and Mrs. Mitwisser, who fears him. He animates the Mitwisser household, brings gifts to its children, roughhouses with the boys, teaches them to stop being stiff little Germans, rouses the little girl from her apathy. Five years old when the first Bear Boy book was published, he has knocked about the world, been to Cairo and Jerusalem, lived with cheap women and cheap drugs, led a hobo's life. He is a big-hearted, irre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sponsible fellow and, apart from being a bit too frantically alive, he does not seem suicidal until he attaches a rubber hose to an exhaust pipe and threads it through the window of his car.

In fact, it is not immediately clear why he has to die at all.

Of course, if literature has only to "be," not to "mean," this is a foolish thing to say. James dies because he dies. Real people kill themselves, too. But a novelist is the God of her novel; she alone decides who lives and who dies. And a suicide is not an ordinary death. It is a judgment, handed down in real life by whoever commits it, and in fiction by an author.

James's suicide in *Heir to the Glimmering World* is what renders the novel interpretable. Take it away—imagine an ending, say, in which Mitwisser, awarded a prestigious chair at Columbia, triumphantly attends James and Annaliese's wedding, at which Mrs. Mitwisser gets up to dance—and the "corona of moral purpose," as Ozick the essayist put it in 1982, is extinguished. She wrote then:

> Literature, to come into being at all, must call on the imagination; imagination is in fact the flesh and blood of literature; but at the same time imagination is the very force that struggles to snuff the redemptive corona. So a redemptive literature . . . must wrestle with its own body, with its own flesh and blood, with its own life. Cell battles cell. The corona flickers, brightens, flares, clouds, grows faint. The *yetzer ha-ra*, the Evil Impulse, fills its cheeks with a black wind, hoping to blow out the redemptive corona; but at the last moment steeples of light spurt up. . . .

Strange. If James lives, the candle goes out. If he dies, it revives. Yet it is not Cynthia Ozick the novelist who kills him. Her imagination—the "Evil Impulse," the "black wind"—has given him life. Who kills him is Cynthia Ozick the essayist.

Cell battles cell.

Ozick the novelist is of James A'Bair's party, just as she is of Isaac Kornfeld's and Nicholas Tilbeck's. All three rebel against the established order. All demand to speak with their own voice. What imaginative writer is not instinctively their ally? What imaginative writer is not, metaphorically, a Karaite?

But rebellion is not a Jewish virtue. It is the refusal to take one's place in the chain of tradition. The great rebels in this tradition are sinful. Cain, Korah, Absalom: all originals, all cursed.

From the point of view of pure Art, this makes Ozick a flawed writer. The religion of Art commands the writer to obey, not betray, the imagination. Yet it also makes her, not only the most masterful, but also the most rigorous Jewish writer of her American times. Many novelists settle for false endings because they lack the courage to stick by their insights or characters to the last. Ozick does something different. She imposes her insights on her characters like a stern judge.

The final paradox is that she has become the most rigorously Jewish of American writers while keeping away, more often than not, from the kind of Jewish subject matter that originally won her the public's attention. "The Pagan Rabbi" and "Envy" are not typical in this respect. Although she has set other works of fiction in intimately Jewish milieus—her marvelous novel *The Cannibal Galaxy* (1983) is the best of them—she has more often preferred to work on the fringes of Jewish life, where marginal or semi-marginal Jews encounter Gentiles. *Heir to the Glimmering World* takes place in such a world. Even Rudolf Mitwisser, who knows an enormous amount about Jews, since one cannot be a scholar of Karaism without being a scholar of Judaism, never talks about them. He has brought from Germany thousands of Hebrew books, but not, so far as we know, a single kiddush cup, pair of phylacteries, or prayer shawl.

In her 1970 essay "Toward a New Yiddish," Ozick makes what at first seems the puzzling statement that "the novel at its 19th-century pinnacle was a Judaized novel." At once, though, she explains herself: "George Eliot and Dickens and Tolstoy were all touched by the Jewish covenant; they wrote of conduct and of the consequences of conduct; they were concerned with a society of will and commandment." These are the kinds of novels she, too, has tried to write. Ultimately, their Jews are less important than what she perceives to be their Jewishness.

In this sense, it is possible to write about Jews from within even while they themselves are outside. But are the results successful? Generally speaking, a skilled novelist uses ideas as a builder uses a scaffold; brick by brick the building goes up, and then the scaffold is removed; although we can reconstruct it in our minds from the building's form, it is no longer visible. In *Heir to the Glimmering World*, the scaffold remains. It is even what holds the building up.

Still, few living writers are as skillful as Ozick at building sentences, paragraphs, prose structures; if she has made a scaffold for *Heir to the Glimmering World* that cannot come down, this is to force us to view the novel through it. She too is a purist, at least when it comes to Jewish writing, and one who has written a powerfully impure book. Her war with herself invites our participation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBSERVATIONS

The Intifada Comes to Duke

Eric Adler & Jack Langer

A NEW ritual on the American academic scene is the annual conference of the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM). The PSM is an umbrella organization that connects various U.S. and Canadian groups; its yearly gathering offers an opportunity for the constituent elements to establish a visible presence on a prestigious university campus and plan strategy and tactics for a movement dedicated to delegitimizing the state of Israel. Over the last several years, the convocation has been held at Ohio State, the University of Michigan, and the University of California at Berkeley. This past October, it was the turn of Duke University.

Duke's president Richard Brodhead had only just assumed office last summer when the university announced that it would be hosting the PSM conference in the fall. Because the organizers had followed the proper procedures for mounting such an event, Brodhead explained, the decision to grant approval was an "easy one." After all, the university was only reaffirming "the importance of the principle of free expression."

But, easy or not, the decision immediately provoked criticism. Some of it came from Duke alumni and others off campus, and some of it came from a student group, the Duke Conservative Union. Altogether, some 90,000 signatures were gathered for an online petition denouncing the university's move.

Among the targets of protest was the PSM's fifth official "guiding principle," which decrees the group's refusal to denounce any terrorist act committed by Palestinians. Condemnation was also directed at the PSM's amply documented history of anti-Semitism and incitement to violence. For example, one scheduled speaker, Charles Carlson, had openly called for lethal attacks against Israeli youth, declaring that "every young Israeli is military—they are all proper war targets," and that "[e]ach wedding, Passover celebration, or bar mitzvah [in Israel] is a potential military target."

Another scheduled participant, Abe Greenhouse, had been arrested in 2003 after smashing a pie in the face of Israeli minister Natan Sharansky as he was about to give a lecture at Rutgers. An organizer of the 2002 PSM gathering, Fadi Kiblawi, had written that the Palestinian plight made him "want to strap a bomb to [his] chest and kill those [Zionist] racists," while an erstwhile PSM speaker, Hatem Bazian, had called for "an intifada in this country" (i.e., the U.S.) and asserted that the sacred texts of Islam require its adherents to "fight the Jews." Prominently active in the movement was Sami al-Arian, who in 2003 was indicted on racketeering and terrorism charges and is currently awaiting trial in Florida.

These and other unequivocal statements and deeds of PSM activists were detailed in letters to the editor and in advertisements that the Duke Conservative Union placed in the *Chronicle*, Duke's student newspaper. In response, the university administration was largely silent. But Brodhead himself, moving beyond his previous stance of avowed neutrality in the name of free expression, issued what amounted to an outright endorsement of the conference. Declining to criticize any aspect of the PSM, he asserted only that a great deal of inaccurate information was circulating on the Internet and that the "deepest principle involved [in

ERIC ADLER *is a Ph.D. candidate in classical studies, and* JACK LANGER *is a Ph.D. candidate in history, at Duke University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hosting the conference] is not even the principle of free speech. It's the principle of education through dialogue." How this "dialogue" would proceed under the PSM's practice of prohibiting recording devices and reporters from many of its sessions was never made clear.

FOLLOWING A month or so of debate on and around the Duke campus, the conference itself opened on October 15. Its hundreds of participants were treated to a series of lectures, panel discussions, and workshops. There was also a variety of "cultural events," including a sing-in and a reading of pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel poetry. Affiliated groups like the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) and Jews for a Just Peace set up tables at which they distributed leaflets and sold such wares as "Free Palestine" T-shirts.

One keynote speech of the PSM's exercise in "education through dialogue" was delivered by Mazin Qumsiyeh, a Yale professor of genetics, who presented a short history of what he portrayed as the virulent Zionist "disease." There was also a lecture by the PLO legal adviser Diana Buttu, a polished speaker whose theme was that Palestinians under Israeli occupation have suffered a fate worse than blacks under apartheid in South Africa, and that Israel is today "the greatest abuser of human rights" in the world. Nasser Abufarha, a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, spoke of Israel's "racist ambitions" and defended the terrorist activities of Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in combating Zionist "aggression." Brian Avery, an activist for ISM, explained that both George W. Bush and John Kerry were "on auction to the Jewish lobby."

Although the Duke administration stoutly maintained both before and during the conference that the PSM and ISM were "distinct and separate" organizations, at least a dozen ISM activists led conference workshops. The ISM specializes in sending European and American students to the West Bank and Gaza to work on behalf of the radical Palestinian cause. The group's co-founder, George Rishmawi, has candidly explained its purpose in recruiting these foreign students: "When Palestinians get shot by Israeli soldiers, no one is interested anymore. But if some of these foreign volunteers get shot or even killed, then the international media will sit up and take notice." That was certainly the case with the ISM activist Rachel Corrie, a twenty-three-year-old student at Evergreen State College who was accidentally killed in 2003 while attempting to block Israeli bulldozers from uncovering terrorist smuggling tunnels in Gaza.

One of the two ISM-led workshops at the Duke conference was "Volunteering in Palestine: Role and Value of International Activists." A last-minute addition to the schedule, the workshop was conducted by ISM co-founder Huweida Arraf. Acknowledging during her talk that the ISM cooperates with the terror organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Arraf encouraged students to join the group and instructed them on how to enter Israel surreptitiously and how to deal with possible arrest and deportation. The Duke administration never commented publicly on the inclusion in the PSM's program of a workshop recruiting for a group with self-professed ties to terrorists and an openly avowed interest in generating casualties.

Another, less practical workshop—"Segregation, Apartheid, and Zionism Are Crimes Against Humanity!"—was led by Bob Brown, a veteran of the Black Power movement of the 1960's. Brown's theoretical discourse consisted mostly of unsubstantiated personal anecdotes and random invective. Thus, he reminisced about meeting Saddam Hussein's spokesman Tariq Aziz in Baghdad in 1974; alleged that Condoleezza Rice's father had tried to force him to marry her some years back; and referred to the Six-Day war, in which Israel fought off the armies of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, as "the Jew war of '67."

Still other sessions were devoted to such subjects as "Jewish dissent," the ethics of suicide bombing and kindred forms of "resistance," and miscellaneous other topics. Charles Carlson's workshop, "The Cause of the Conflict: How Judaized-Christians Enable War," was inexplicably cancelled.

AFTER THREE days of meetings, the conference came to a close. "It's a good thing we did here," announced the university's vice president for public affairs, John Burness, setting the tone for a chorus of self-applause. In its own post-mortem roundup, the student-run *Chronicle*, which had endorsed the PSM's official refusal to denounce Palestinian terrorism, lauded the university administration for "masterfully" handling the affair and reported with great satisfaction that the "overall tone of the weekend was one of discussion and learning." Looking to the future, the paper urged upon Duke a positive responsibility "to continue the dialogue the Palestine Solidarity Movement conference initiated."

And indeed the close of the conference did not mark the end of Duke's experiment in "discussion and learning." To appreciate what happened next, it helps to know that, unlike the Duke Conservative Union, the university's two Jewish organizations, the campus Hillel (known as the Freeman Center) and a student group called Duke Friends of Israel, had opted from the beginning to refrain from criticizing the university for agreeing to host the conference. In fact, in a demonstration of their own commitment to free expression, the groups publicly praised the decision. At the same time, and in the same spirit, they formulated a "Joint Israel Initiative." This was a resolution pledging that both they and the PSM would con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duct a civil dialogue, would together condemn the murder of innocent civilians, and would work toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the eve of the conference, the Jewish groups also staged a "rally against terror."

But whatever hopes the Jewish campus organizations held out for civil dialogue were rapidly dashed. Representatives of the PSM refused to sign the Joint Israel Initiative, objecting in particular to its condemnation of violence. Not only that, but in the aftermath of the conference, even as the open anti-Semitism on display there was going entirely without censure, Duke's Jewish organizations themselves—and Jews in general—became the object of furious attack.

The first salvo was an article in the *Chronicle* by one of its columnists, a Duke senior named Philip Kurian. Headlined "The Jews," it denounced Jews as "the most privileged 'minority' group" in the United States and in particular bemoaned the "shocking overrepresentation" of Jews in academia. Replete with references to the "powerful Jewish establishment" and "exorbitant Jewish privilege in the United States," the article went on to characterize Jews as a phony minority that can "renounce their difference by taking off the yarmulke."

Kurian's column was followed by an even more intense anti-Semitic outpouring on the *Chronicle*'s electronic discussion boards. "I am glad you have the courage to stand up to the Jews," wrote one correspondent. Another said he "was thrilled to read Mr. Kurian's belligerent critique of that long-nosed creature sitting squarely in the middle of the room that nobody is allowed to talk about. Yes—that elephant Mr. Sharon . . . and his treasonous cousins in America." One posting, besides providing a link to an online article blaming the Jews for the outbreak of World War II, called for "an investigation into the Jewish community's practices and leadership during the past 150 years." "Whenever anyone says anything negative about the Jews," expostulated still another writer, "they go after them with Mafia-style ruthlessness. . . . This is the reason Jews are the most hated people on earth and why they have always been kicked out of every country."

HAVING WELCOMED known anti-Semitic agitators onto its campus, how did the Duke administration react when the after-effects of the agitation began to play themselves out before its eyes? Responding to Kurian's article in a letter to the *Chronicle*, President Brodhead first condemned the "virulence" of some of the PSM's *critics*. He then pronounced himself "deeply troubled" by Kurian's sentiments, while offering assurances that Kurian "probably did not mean to . . . [revive] stereotypical images that have played a long-running role in the history of anti-Semitism." Reverting to his by now standard mantra, Brodhead stressed again that the central issue was the importance of "education through dialogue." "I am grateful," he wrote, "to the many individuals and groups who helped turn last week's Palestine Solidarity Movement conference into a peaceful and constructive event," and "proud to be at a school where difficult matters are dealt with in such a mature and constructive way."

It is all but impossible to imagine the president of Duke offering a similar encomium to, say, a conference of neo-Nazi rabble-rousers on his campus, or defending a parade of speakers dilating on the "diseased" history of, say, American blacks. It is in fact impossible to imagine Duke agreeing to host such debased goings-on in the first place. In that sense, the administration's appeals to free expression and dialogue were the purest disingenuousness.

Moreover, and whether or not a university has a duty to license the unfettered expression on its campus of every venomous notion under the sun, the real issue at Duke was always the refusal of the licensing authorities to call such notions by their proper names—in this case, bald anti-Semitism and incitement to the murder of innocents. That refusal on the part of the university and its president, a mark not of "constructive" liberality but of cowardice and complicity, is what led infallibly to the post-conference outbreak of anti-Jewish hatred. Once the guardians of the citadel granted permission to open the gates, is it any surprise that the marauding hordes came storming through?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBSERVATIONS

Sartre vs. Camus

Algis Valiunas

THE GREATEST French writer of the 20th century was Marcel Proust, but in their day, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Albert Camus (1913-1960) enjoyed an intellectual cachet that Proust in his own lifetime could only have dreamed of. Each was a novelist, a playwright, a philosopher, and a political intellectual, and in these various lines of work both were the acclaimed eminences of their time and place. For a while they were considered an item: the twin geniuses of existentialism, the French philosophical movement they pioneered and embodied. And indeed they were often together, the best of friends.

As we learn from *Camus and Sartre: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel that Ended It*, a fascinating and intermittently astute book by Ronald Aronson,* the two men met in Nazi-occupied Paris at the height of World War II. The occasion was the June 1943 opening of Sartre's play, *The Flies*, a recasting of the Orestes revenge story with overtones of Resistance heroism.

By this time, both men were public figures. Sartre's novel, *Nausea*, an account of slipping out of ordinary life into the gradually liberating awareness of life's meaninglessness, had come out five years earlier; his monumental existentialist tract, *Being and Nothingness*, was about to be published. As for the younger, Algerian-born Camus, both his first novel, *The Stranger*, and his philosophical signature piece, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, had been brought out within the previous year to general amazement and acclaim.

Even before the two met, they had reviewed each other's books. Writing in a left-wing Algerian newspaper, Camus had praised *Nausea* for its dramatic demonstration that "at the bottom of the most elementary act is its fundamental absurdity." A few months later, reviewing a collection of Sartre's short fiction, he singled out its portraits of individuals who, apprehending the absurdity of existence, begin to realize they are free to make anything they choose of their lives, even if they are sometimes distressingly unsure just what that should be.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus would offer his own depiction of the freedom that comes of accepting the godless universe in which one happens to exist for a brief spell. His appeal to the singular adventure of a life well lived, without hope or fear of eternity, registered powerfully with Sartre. In a 6,000-word review of Camus's *The Stranger*—about a man who drifts numbly through life until, condemned for murder, he finds happiness in "the benign indifference of the universe"—Sartre sketched an author, Camus, sounding very much like Sartre himself, especially the Sartre of the fiction Camus had himself reviewed.

SOON AFTER their meeting, as Aronson tells it, an obviously thrilled Sartre offered Camus the chance to direct and play the lead in a touring production of his new play, *No Exit* (the best thing he ever wrote in any genre). Although the production never came off, the bond had been forged, and seemed made to last. The two men "prized living authentically," Aronson writes, and authenticity could ex-

ALGIS VALIUNAS *writes regularly on culture and politics. His review of* The Guardians *by Geoffrey Kabaservice appeared in our November 2004 issue.*

* Chicago, 291 pp., $32.50.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tend to, and survive, candor and even bluntness between them. During one night's boozing, Sartre announced their order of intellectual rank: "I'm more intelligent than you, huh? More intelligent." Camus agreed.

But if Sartre's was by mutual consent the more imposing mind, Camus was the more impressive man, and both of them knew that as well. Simone de Beauvoir, the writer who was Sartre's lifelong lover, but whose romance with him admitted all manner of extraneous erotic possibilities, told Camus that he could have her if he wanted her. He did not want her. Sartre, one suspects, found Camus's refusal more disturbing than Beauvoir's offer, especially as he happened to be toadishly ugly and Camus handsome and charming.

In addition to handsomeness and charm, Camus also had boldness and courage and integrity; these, along with intelligence, were the qualities Sartre most esteemed. Camus had proved his honor and his nerve in the Resistance against the occupying Nazis, when he edited the clandestine newspaper *Combat*, whose proud socialist banner read "From Resistance to Revolution." Sartre for his part had served in the defeated French army, spent several months as a prisoner of war, and then returned to full-time literature.

Sartre was extremely productive during the war. But when he later spoke of himself as "a writer who resisted" rather than a member of the Resistance who wrote, he was implicitly comparing himself to the less intelligent but more impressive Camus. *What is Literature?*, the classic of literary theory that Sartre wrote just after the war, espouses writing that is itself vital with political commitment—that commitment being, naturally, to the radical Left. Aronson makes the case that the writer who, to Sartre's mind, best fit his specifications was Camus: "This young man was already the person Sartre was trying to become: the engaged but not starry-eyed or ideological writer, at once 'poet of freedom' and political activist."

SARTRE'S ENSHRINING of Camus bore a price, however. In Aronson's judgment, it complicated the friendship, making Camus fear he would be thought of as Sartre's creature rather than as his own man. The younger man began to feel that "he had to define himself *in contrast* to Sartre."

There may be something to this, but Aronson makes too much of it. In fact, the principal source of the growing disagreement between the two was not psychological but philosophical and political. Already in a 1945 interview Camus contended that his understanding of the absurd had nothing to do with Sartrean existentialism. To be more precise, he was becoming disenchanted with the movement's Marxist underpinnings, and was looking for a more accommodating basis for the idea of complete freedom of choice. As Camus saw it, if a man was really free, then he could make of himself anything at all; his actions ought not be circumscribed by the particular historical situation he found himself in, and especially ought not be dictated by some intellectual's telling him he had to decide between behaving admirably like a revolutionary socialist or piggishly like a bourgeois.

By 1951, at any rate, the divergence had become an irreparable rupture. That was the year in which Camus published *L'homme révolté*, known in English as *The Rebel* but translated more accurately by Aronson as *Man in Revolt*. This book ranks with *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Fall* (1956) among Camus's greatest works, and as one of the landmark titles of the last century. Unfortunately, Aronson finds it ideologically tendentious, and is not much use in helping one appreciate its excellence.

Man in Revolt indicts what Camus sees as the highest form of modern criminality: mass murder on behalf of noble ideas, and specifically on behalf of the idea of a perfected humanity in the manner of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. To Camus's mind, the revolutionary nihilism exemplified by the Russian Revolution and by Nazism (though he barely touches upon the latter) is the supremely beguiling and supremely terrible theme of modern life. He traces its intellectual origins to the metaphysical ponderings of such figures as de Sade, Baudelaire, Hegel, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Lautréamont, as well as to the revolutionary zealotry of Saint-Just and Marx. To overthrow the divinely appointed natural order, to institute forever the humane and rational arrangements that will allow all to thrive as never before—these became the ends of the revolutionary, and anything at all was permitted in order to achieve them: starvation, slave labor, a bullet in the back of the skull. Camus wanted no part of this viciousness with its eyes wide open.

Sartre, not unexpectedly, loathed *Man in Revolt*, considered it a personal affront, and spearheaded the effort to discredit it in the pages of *Les temps modernes* (*Modern Times*), the hugely influential journal he edited. A Sartre disciple, Francis Jeanson, was enlisted to savage the book; when Camus wrote a hotly contemptuous letter to the editor, Sartre himself responded by turning up the heat in 10,000 vitriolic words, while Jeanson tossed off a 15,000-word justification of his review. Camus wrote an answer that he never sent.

THE CONTROVERSY between the two men, which would only deepen over time, has been newly documented together with four long essays of scholarly commentary in *Sartre and Camus: A Historic Confrontation*, edited and translated by David A. Sprintzen and Adrian van den Hoven.* The decisive quarrel boiled down to this: Camus spoke for freedom and nature, two of the central principles of liberal democracy; Sartre spoke for justice and history, the guiding lights of socialist dictatorship.

* Humanity Books, 299 pp., $45.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Theoretically, an intelligent liberalism could accommodate all of these competing claims. Of the two men, Camus was more willing to approach such a compromise than the intransigent Sartre. But each had his hierarchy, and in the throes of disputation each hardened his own position so that any reconciliation became impossible.

Like Aronson, who decries "cold-war partisanship," Sprintzen and all but one of his colleagues have a simple explanation for the friends' bitter falling-out. In Sprintzen's words, "the polarized environment" of the cold war delimited the thinking of supposedly free and reasonable men. What was responsible for causing this polarized environment was, of course, the conflict between Western democracy and Soviet Communism. About this, the commentators in *Sartre and Camus* strike a putatively agnostic view, apportioning the blame pretty much equally between the two parties, but with a slight preference for the idea that the West, and particularly the United States, was really the more culpable.

Sartre himself was under no compunctions on this score. In the wake of his dispute with Camus, he began to cleave ever more closely to Moscow's party line. He became precisely the sort of Communist whom Camus hated most: not only a zealot for his maniacal idea of justice, careless with other men's blood, but a horrific cynic as well.

To gain admittance to a Communist charade known as the World Peace Congress in Vienna in December 1952, Sartre prohibited a scheduled Viennese production of his 1948 play *Dirty Hands*, which had offended the Communists, and required that all future productions have the approval of the local Communist party. Two weeks before the Peace Congress opened, he refused to comment publicly on the show trial of the Czech Communist leader Rudolf Slansky, convicted along with others of belonging to an international Jewish conspiracy to undermine the cause of world Communism. Early the next year, he again kept his mouth shut about the "Jewish doctors' plot" that Stalin had contrived to whip up anti-Semitic hysteria.

Even Aronson is appalled by Sartre's doggish behavior. For their part, the scholars assembled in *Sartre and Camus* generally agree that the brouhaha over *Man in Revolt* showed both Camus and Sartre at their worst, and that their unthinking vehemence in the thrall of competing cold-war ideologies robbed them of their customary perspicacity. But they are utterly wrong about Camus, and wrong again in thinking Sartre customarily perspicacious. The deformity caused by his political vocation was by no means peculiar to the cold-war period but had showed itself earlier and affected his entire literary career.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL audacity that was existentialism had itself been born of the most banal political idea. As presented in Sartre's 1946 essay, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"—the essay is essentially a précis of *Being and Nothingness*—the litany runs like this: there is no God; there is no human nature; there is only the human condition, which is to say, historically determined conditions; within these conditions man is free; "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself"; and each man is responsible for himself—as well as for everyone else.

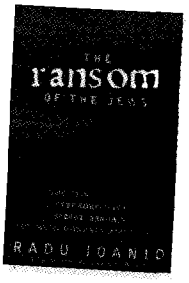
To put the case plainly, Sartre's existentialism ends in a socialist fantasy because it begins in a socialist fantasy. The nonexistence of God is treated by him as an indisputable given, not as a demonstrable proposition; the idea that man can make what he will of himself is similarly treated as a given and for the same reason—because it is indispensable to his political project. Without these two assumptions, the argument would go nowhere, for if men are created by God, then Sartrean existentialism is a ridiculous exercise in the higher narcissism. The existence of God *must* be annulled, because it leads to bad politics.

The same flawed reasoning infects almost all of Sartre's work, including some of his best. Within the realm of good socialist politics, *the* war to the death is the war against the bourgeoisie and its political and religious beliefs, which Sartre lavishly despised. In *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946), which professes to be a sober meditation on the rational and the irrational in politics, Sartre is lucid and penetrating about the anti-Semitism directed particularly at Jewish intelligence; but when he proceeds to declare anti-Semitism "a bourgeois phenomenon," from which the virtuous proletariat is, at least in theory, happily free, his analysis goes off the rails. Though he does not spell out the conclusions of his argument, its inexorable logic is that the unsavory attitudes of the bourgeoisie can be eradicated with a clear conscience, even if doing so entails eradicating bourgeois persons along the way.

As Sartre's politics deform his moral philosophy, so do they turn his fiction into tub-thumping. In the trilogy *The Roads of Freedom* (1945-1949), which is really an unfinished tetralogy, the word "freedom" appears almost as often as "and" or "the." Once again, the enemy to be slaughtered without mercy is bourgeois minginess, the epitome of anti-existential unfreedom. In the first installment of the trilogy, titled *The Age of Reason*, Mathieu, a thirty-year-old intellectual, scrambles over the course of 400 pages for the money to procure an abortion for Marcelle, his lover of seven years; marriage and child being unthinkably bourgeois, both Mathieu and his creator speak of the fetus inside Marcelle as a ripening pustule. In the end, Mathieu gets his "freedom *for nothing*"—that is, freedom to no apparent purpose—and we are meant to understand this exalted aimlessness as the highest existential awareness anyone can reach. Although there are flashes of brilliance throughout the trilogy, the politicking that shapes

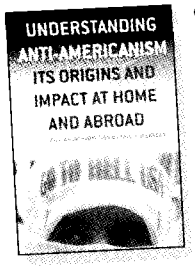
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RADU IOANID
The Ransom of the Jews



The story of the extraordinary secret bargain by which Romania traded its Jews to Israel in return for cash and political influence. By this "well-conceived and calculated policy," writes Elie Wiesel in his Foreword, Romania "became richer by allowing its Jews to leave." Mr. Ioanid draws upon restricted archival records and exclusive interviews to reveal the full, startling story. "Trenchant, lucid, and superbly researched.... This is one of those rare books that is both an invaluable primary source and an occasion for profound thought."—ANDREI CODRESCU

Now in paperback...
PAUL HOLLANDER, editor
Understanding Anti-Americanism



Original essays analyzing the causes and effects of anti-American sentiments and actions in areas throughout the world—a cogent overview of the phenomenon. "A fascinating collection... by some of America's foremost scholars and thinkers."—ROBERT KAGAN

Ivan R. Dee, Publisher
Chicago • A Member of the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group
www.ivanrdee.com
At your bookseller, or order toll-free 1-800-462-6420 with a major credit card.

Sartre's philosophy kills his every effort to render living beings in art.

BOTH AS a man and as a writer, Camus had a truer feeling for life, including life's freedom. This vital capacity made him more sensible, in the fullest meaning of the word. But it must also be said that it limited his penetration as a political intellectual. For all his loathing of Communism and his devotion to freedom in the abstract, for example, Camus fastidiously declined to come out for the democratic West, and particularly for the United States, as bulwarks against the former and champions of the latter.

Camus's personal moderation and decency make Sartre look like the scoundrel he was. But his hope that moderation and decency would triumph against barbarity was insufficiently appreciative of the unfathomable depth of certain political quandaries—like the one in his beloved native Algeria. In his "Appeal for a Civilian Truce in Algeria," a lecture delivered in Algiers in 1956 just as Arab anti-colonial militants and immovable French colonists were about to dive into a bloodbath, Camus spoke of a tragic collision of two bands of heedless fanatics, as if, by parting the combatants, temperate intermediaries could yet bring a lasting peace.

But temperance and reasonableness could only delay, not forestall, the fanatical violence, which in Algiers as elsewhere in the modern world was soon directed against the temperate and the reasonable. To argue, as Camus did, that "French and Arabs can be made to coexist . . . [and] that such coexistence will do justice to the rights of both sides" was unconscionably naïve. Today, even Arabs and Arabs do not coexist in Algeria.

The first tremors of militant Islam's crusade against the West, and also against Arab political moderation, were already shaking the ground in the 1950's. Camus felt them, but could not divine their full significance. He did write, in his "Preface to Algerian Reports" and "Algeria 1958," about the dangers that the ambition for Islamic empire presented; that ambition, he said, if unchecked, could lead to World War III. But he mistakenly assumed it would be checked.

How so? In his philanthropic enthusiasm, Camus exhorted men and women like himself to "gather together to beg merely, without making any other claims yet, that on a single spot of the globe a handful of innocent victims be spared." Camus did not understand, or could not bear to think, that saving lives then would do nothing to prevent the loss of many others' lives later, and that violent fanaticism must be extinguished if it is not to increase and multiply. Today's free Algeria, which is what the uncompromising Arabs of Camus's day demanded, is a place where 100,000 civilians have died since 1992 in a civil war notable even in that part of the world for its uninhibited brutality, and where the Arabs of the Islamic Salvation Front awaken sleeping Arab children in order to slash their throats. Reality has proved too cruel for Camus's political imagination.

IN FACT, neither Camus nor Sartre had sufficient imagination when it came to politics. Had they philosophized more and politicized less, their opinions—and, in Sartre's case, his art—could have been what their exaggerated reputations make them out to be: the outstanding intellectuals of their time.

Still, as between the two of them, and despite Sartre's extraordinary intellect, Camus's was without doubt the more significant achievement. Even if he felt too much to think dispassionately, he possessed a born novelist's instinct for capturing the truth alive. As for Sartre, his passionate temperament issued in a disfiguring taste for revolutionary violence, while his ambition to explain the world as nobody had adequately explained it before issued in encyclopedic fatuity. Sartre knew everything, and everything he knew was wrong.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUSIC

Haydn!

Terry Teachout

IN 1945, Arturo Toscanini told the music critic B.H. Haggin that he preferred Haydn to Mozart. "I will tell you frankly: sometimes I find Mozart boring," he said to his astonished interviewer. "Not G-minor [the G Minor Symphony, K. 550]: that is great tragedy; and not concerti; but other music. Is always beautiful—but is always the same."

Toscanini's offhand remark still has the power to startle, but in 1945 it must have come as nothing less than a bolt from the blue. Even now, few listeners would agree; six decades ago, such an opinion, especially when expressed by the world's most famous conductor, was counter-cultural to the point of heresy. For while Joseph Haydn's greatness was universally *accepted* in 1945, his music was *popular* only in the broadest sense of the word. Whether in Europe or the U.S., few conductors programmed even his best-known symphonies with any regularity, and only a handful of his works for smaller forces were known outside of a tiny circle of connoisseurs. And while a reasonably large number of his greatest pieces were recorded in the pre-LP era, virtually none of those recordings were by world-class artists.[1]

This state of affairs is all the more surprising in light of the fact that Haydn's music was better-known and more popular at the end of the 18th century than that of any other European composer, Bach and Mozart included. Indeed, as the Haydn scholar H.C. Robbins Landon has suggested, he may well have been the most popular classical composer who has ever lived:

> Haydn . . . achieved a total European popularity within his lifetime; by 1790 his music was adored even in the far corners of the Continent such as Seville, St. Petersburg, Pest (now Budapest), and Stockholm. . . . The music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Bruckner, and Mahler was adored by a segment of their contemporary audiences, but it was not until after the deaths of those six composers that their works achieved the kind of popularity that Haydn had enjoyed during his lifetime.

Haydn's fall from grace, as is so often the case in art, was as complete as his earlier acceptance, and to the extent that he was rehabilitated after World War II, it was less through live performances than through recordings. Starting in the 50's, a small but devoted group of performers began to record his major works in bulk,

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY*'s regular music critic and the drama critic of the* Wall Street Journal, *also writes about the arts at www.terryteachout.com. His latest book is* All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine *(Harcourt). He was recently appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President Bush.*

[1] One of the few great Haydn recordings of the 78 era was Toscanini's own 1929 performance with the New York Philharmonic of the D Major Symphony ("Clock"), Hob. I:101, available on an English CD that can be ordered directly from www.amazon.co.uk (Naxos Historical 8.110841). In addition, the pianist Alfred Cortot, the violinist Jacques Thibaud, and the cellist Pablo Casals recorded the G Major Trio ("Gypsy Rondo"), Hob. XV:25, in 1927 (Naxos Historical 8.110188, available in the U.S.), and Vladimir Horowitz, Toscanini's son-in-law, recorded the E Flat Major Piano Sonata, Hob. XVI:52, in 1932, in a performance available as part of *HMV/Gramophone and RCA Victor Recordings*, 1928-1947, an anthology of Horowitz's early recordings that can be ordered directly from www.andante.com (Andante Collection 2981/84, four CD's).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

making it possible at last for lay listeners to study him in depth.[2]

Today, nearly all of Haydn's music is available on CD—but he remains a composer who is more admired than played, at least in the concert hall. No celebrated conductor or instrumentalist champions him; no stylishly written English-language narrative biography has yet been published.[3]

The absence of such a biography from the extensive Haydn literature helps to explain one reason for his comparative obscurity, which is that his life, though interesting, was not notably eventful. A child prodigy born into a large working-class family in 1732, he was taken into the Choir School of Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral at the age of eight, staying there until his voice changed. After that he made his living as a court musician, serving the Esterházys, a family of Austro-Hungarian nobles, from 1761 to his death in 1809. He knew Mozart and taught Beethoven, became famous when he took a leave of absence in 1791 to compose and conduct in England, and left behind a body of correspondence that does much to suggest the attractive, no-nonsense personality recalled by his friends and colleagues.

That Haydn was not nearly so psychologically complex a figure as, say, Mozart or Beethoven does not by itself explain why 19th-century listeners failed to warm to his music, but it does run parallel to the main reason, which is that he eschewed the emotional extremes that appealed so strongly to the romantics. Landon speaks of "Haydn's message of optimism, faith, and cheer," which is perhaps another way of saying that he was a *Kapellmeister* by temperament, a workaday craftsman rather than a febrile enthusiast. The romantics turned their noses up at such folk—even when they happened to rank among the supreme geniuses of Western art.

WHAT MANNER of music did this *Kapellmeister* of genius produce?

The first thing one notices about Haydn's music is that there is so much of it: 106 symphonies, dozens of string quartets, piano trios, and piano sonatas, a substantial body of large-scale choral music, and a great many operas. None of the latter has held the stage, but the well-listened music lover is likely to be familiar with a surprisingly large percentage of Haydn's works in other genres, though one paradoxical impediment to understanding him is the fact that the greater part of his music is astonishingly consistent in both quality and inspiration. Especially if most of them are of good quality, it is by definition far more difficult to get to know 106 symphonies than 41 (Mozart)—or nine (Beethoven).

Another problem is that Haydn's extreme originality is not always obvious to listeners who come to his music without a clear understanding of its historical context. The reason for this is that Haydn played a very large role in defining what is "normal" in classical music. He essentially invented the string-quartet medium, and though he was not the first composer of symphonies, he was more responsible than anyone else for developing and codifying the four-movement form that prevails to this day; in addition, he established the instrumental parameters of the now-familiar "classical" symphony orchestra.

Modest as always, Haydn himself attributed his originality to the circumstances in which he worked as a court musician:

> My prince was satisfied with all my works; I received approval; as head of an orchestra, I could undertake experiments, could observe that which enhanced an effect and that which weakened it, thus improving, adding to it, taking away from it, taking risks. I was cut off from the world; there was no one in my vicinity to make me unsure of myself or to persecute me; and so I had to become original.

Whatever the reason, the musical style that evolved over the course of Haydn's employment by the Esterházy family is noteworthy above all for its combination of unpredictability and equipoise: it is balanced without ever being dull. While one can hear this in everything he wrote, I find his last symphony, No. 104 in D Major (popularly known as the "London" Symphony), to be a veritable locus classicus of what makes Haydn Haydn. It begins unexpectedly with a broad, spacious introduction in D minor, at once grand and pensive, that leads no less unexpectedly to a first movement full of the vigor and bustle one might almost expect to hear in the overture to a comic opera. This public utterance leads to a tenderly poised major-key slow movement, followed in turn by one of the droll, heavy-footed minuets in which Haydn specialized; a high-spirited finale wraps the proceedings up with the kind of life-enhancing brilliance that no other classical composer has ever quite managed to equal.

For all the summary excellence of the "London" Symphony, it is important—essential, really—to keep in mind that one might just as well have chosen any of 30 or 40 other compositions to stand for the whole

[2] Among the most musically satisfying are Sir Thomas Beecham's recordings with the Royal Philharmonic of the "London" Symphonies, Nos. 93-104, currently available on a pair of budget-priced two-CD sets (EMI Classics 85513-2 and 85770-2); the Beaux Arts Trio's recordings of the complete piano trios (Philips 454 098-2, nine CD's); and Alfred Brendel's recordings of eleven major piano sonatas (Philips 416 643-2, four CD's). A more recent venture along similar lines is *The Haydn Project*, an anthology by the Emerson String Quartet of seven representative quartets composed at various points in Haydn's long career (DGG 471 327-2, two CD's).

[3] The best single-volume book about Haydn is *Haydn: His Life and Music* (1988), a critical biography by H.C. Robbins Landon and David Wyn Jones that is largely accessible to non-musicians but contains too many extended excerpts from contemporary documents to make for easy reading.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Haydn's work. Other pieces emphasize other facets of his richly varied style. Some are wittier, some more emotionally penetrating, some more obviously "serious" in tone.[4] Yet none could be mistaken for the work of anyone else. Has there ever been an artist, regardless of genre, who was at the same time so prolific and so unfailingly excellent, so varied and so immediately recognizable?

HAYDN'S LOSS of popularity has long fascinated me, not merely as a historical phenomenon but because I love his music so much. Whatever his ultimate standing in the ranks of the immortals, he is one of the half-dozen composers who has meant the most to me personally, ever since I first heard Toscanini's 1953 recording of the "Surprise" Symphony more than three decades ago.

More often than not, such intimate identification with a creative artist is an act of self-definition: in deciding what we love best, we acquire a clearer sense of who we are and what we want to become. Why, then, do I find Haydn's music so deeply satisfying—and what does this satisfaction tell me?

One of the things I like best about Haydn is also one of the things the romantics liked least: his sense of humor. This, however, goes far beyond the charmingly onomatopoeic "jokes" alluded to in the nicknames of the "Clock" and "Surprise" Symphonies, or such touches of whimsy as the bass-baritone *blat* of the bassoons in the slow movement of the D Major Symphony, Hob. I:93. Haydn was not merely a jokester but a full-fledged wit, one whose knack for frustrating our expectations makes the alert listener laugh out loud (in the process often arousing the wrath of concertgoers seated in the immediate vicinity). Time and again, for instance, he slips sideways into the "wrong" key, as in the first movement of the E Flat Major Piano Sonata, Hob. XVI:52, which bristles with what might be called musical puns—that is, short musical phrases whose repetition in different keys at unexpected points in a given piece alters their meaning to humorous effect.

Such touches of wit are merely the most obvious manifestations of the "liveliness of mind" that B.H. Haggin thought to be the aspect of Haydn's music to which Toscanini responded most enthusiastically. Nor is this liveliness in any way superficial. It goes to the heart of Haydn's style. As the English musicologist Donald Tovey explained:

> [T]he language of Haydn and Mozart is not only essentially dramatic, but mainly comedic, and in their art-forms greatness is always expressed in terms of symmetry. Fortunately, Haydn habitually achieves his symmetry in a paradoxical way. From one moment to the next he is always unexpected, and it is only at the end that we discover how perfect are his proportions.

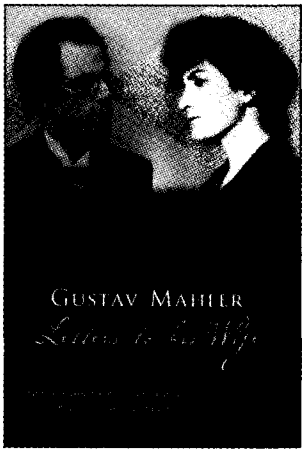
The most telling thing about this thoughtful explanation is Tovey's use of the word "comedic." Just as Haydn the man was deeply religious, so was Haydn the artist a classicist of the highest seriousness—but one who did not assume his seriousness to be incompatible with humor. Like most (but not all!) of the greatest artists, he seems to have understood by instinct that "life is such an indissoluble mixture of heartbreak and absurdity that it might be more truly portrayed through the refracting lens of comedy."[5]

I originally wrote those words a few weeks after 9/11, at a moment when artists in New York City and elsewhere were turning their backs on comedy and succumbing to the temptation of portentousness. At such times we are at the mercy of those who confuse seriousness with

[4] A very different side of Haydn, for instance, can be heard in the incisive, almost astringent-sounding B Minor Piano Sonata, Hob. XVI:32 (recorded by Alfred Brendel).

[5] "The Importance of Being Less Earnest," collected in *A Terry Teachout Reader* (Yale).

Gustav Mahler
Letters to his Wife



edited by
Henry-Louis de La Grange and Günther Weiss
in collaboration with
Knud Martner
revised and translated by
Antony Beaumont

The first complete, unabridged edition. With 350 letters, 188 of them previously unpublished, and 61 illustrations.

"Once the stiffness of unfamiliarity has been softened by a few months of marriage, Mahler's style of correspondence with Alma is generally simple, direct, and astonishingly down-to-earth. In a manner akin to that of his musical style, he spikes his language with witticisms and double-entendres, colloquialisms and quotations from librettos and classical works of literature."

—from the Preface

$40.00 cloth
At bookstores, or call
1-800-666-2211

Cornell University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

solemnity—a mistake Haydn never made.

REREADING THE diaries of Alec Guinness during a recent illness, I ran across this passage:

> For me there are two salves to apply when I feel spiritually bruised—listening to a Haydn symphony or sonata (his clear common sense always penetrates) and seeking out something in Montaigne's essays.

I was struck not merely by the phrase "clear common sense" but by Guinness's linking of the music of Haydn with the essays of Michel de Montaigne, that quintessential spokesman for the Age of Reason. Though the comparison is an astute one, and in many ways convincing, I feel a greater kinship between Haydn and his near-contemporary, Samuel Johnson. To be sure, Haydn is perhaps more like what the sometimes morose Johnson would have *wished* to be. But their essential similarities seem to me revealing in the highest degree—above all, in the way they blended wit, classical poise, and moral seriousness into an indissoluble whole.

I wonder if this combination of traits might give rise to the healing effect to which Guinness refers. Their "clear common sense," of course, is rooted in a clear-eyed acceptance of things as they are, the stern minor-key "realism" of a work like the near-gnomic D Minor Quintet ("Fifths"), Hob. III:76, finding its responding echo in the bluntness of Johnson's pithiest utterances ("Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little enjoyed"). Yet this acceptance proves in the end liberating, for it allows both men to tell their truths with the extreme concentration that is the refining fire of wit, and not infrequently with the infusion of high spirits that turns penetrating wit into consoling humor.

It is no coincidence that Haydn and Johnson were both misunderstood and undervalued by the romantics, among whom "common sense" was a synonym for the prosily bourgeois conception of life on which they had haughtily turned their backs. Instead of Haydn, a man of modest piety who embraced the world as it was and is, they preferred Beethoven, a woolly-minded, proto-romantic pantheist who wanted everyone else to embrace the world as he longed for it to be. Not for them Johnson's bracingly tonic realism, much less Haydn's "optimism, faith, and cheer." Small wonder, too, they found Johnson's faith as unsatisfactory as Haydn's jokes, both being manifestations of a temperament from which the expansive, humorless idealism of a Shelley or a Wagner could hardly have been further removed.

Those, on the other hand, who judge 19th-century idealism in the light of its bitter 20th-century fruits are more likely to have a greater appreciation of the virtues of classicism, not to mention the comic vision of life, of which Haydn is one of Western culture's matchless exemplars. Just as Boswell's Johnson told his harsh truths with a leavening touch of wryness, so did Haydn acknowledge the natural law of tonality with a sly wink. In the absence of that overarching order, his musical "jokes" would have had no meaning, in much the same way that the concept of "dissonance" is meaningless to the musical atonalist who refuses to distinguish between dissonance and consonance. Instead, they remind us of the eternal verities—and so lift up our hearts.

Everyone who knows anything about Haydn knows how he told a biographer (possibly apocryphally) that "since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."[6] It is a lovely, deservedly oft-quoted remark, but I find that another reputed statement of his sums up the essence of Haydn even more completely:

> Often when contending with obstacles of every sort that interfered with my work . . . a secret feeling within me whispered: "There are but few contented and happy men here below; grief and care prevail everywhere; perhaps your labors may one day be the source from which the weary and worn, or the man burdened with affairs, may derive a few moments' rest and refreshment." What a powerful motive for pressing onward!

What a blessing that he did.

[6] Of all the recordings of Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* (in connection with which this anecdote is most often repeated), it is Herbert von Karajan's 1966 performance with the Berlin Philharmonic that strikes the truest balance between good cheer and high seriousness (DGG 449 761-2, two CD's).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Body and Soul

I Am Charlotte Simmons
by Tom Wolfe
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 676 pp. $28.95

Reviewed by
Sam Schulman

In his long career, Tom Wolfe has written more pages in order to *épater les bien-pensants* than any writer now alive. He must be surprised, then, that his latest novel-of-the-decade, *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—genial, trustful, sympathetic—has already created as much ill will as his earlier waspish commentaries on fashionable politics, art, and social pretension. But so it has. Though *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is not without its defenders, its detractors have been numerous and petulant.

More than any writer of our time, Wolfe has also created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed, for which he is again being punished. Thus, the chief gripe of those who dislike *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is that it is not sufficiently "Wolfean." Michiko Kakutani's reaction in the *New York Times* was typical. She had expected, she wrote, a grand Tom Wolfe panorama of "big-city racial politics, big-business financial shenanigans, or big-time criminal justice." Instead, she continued in high sarcasm, Wolfe has taken on "the momentous subject of college life (college life? Yes, college life!), and . . . serves up the revelation—yikes!—that students crave sex and beer, love to party, wear casual clothes, and use four-letter words."

For others, the very familiarity of Wolfe's subject matter breeds contempt. "I have never been a Wall Street banker or an Atlanta real-estate developer," wrote Adam Kirsch in the *New York Sun*, "so I must take the accuracy of Mr. Wolfe's earlier novels on trust. But I have been a college student, . . . and I can say with assurance that nothing about Dupont [University] rings true."

But this is to miss the point. The Dupont of *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is meant to be exceptional, not necessarily true. It is as heightened a version of college reality as were Wolfe's earlier portraits of the extravagances of big business, big-city racial politics, and the rest. The question is whether and to what extent this newest portrait succeeds in enabling a Wolfean panorama in full.

The novel's eponymous hero is a wholly admirable girl from a poor family in a small mountain town in North Carolina called Sparta. Charlotte is ingenuous, but no mere ingénue—nature gave her a perfect SAT score of 1600, and she has been nurtured by the demanding, supportive love of a strong mother, a silent father, and an inspiring teacher. Charlotte leaves Sparta without a single decent pair of jeans but armed with this intellectual and moral inheritance and with a sense that she will return either with her shield of Athena or on it.

The Dupont University at which she arrives has been clearly modeled on Duke—though removed to the countryside of Pennsylvania, which gives the book an oddly O'Hara-esque note. (The novel is chock-full

Sam Schulman *writes on politics and culture. His essay, "How the Feminists Saved Marriage," appeared in our July-August 2004 issue.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of allusions to stories about the entry of the young into the adult world—Balzac's Rubempre novels, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Michael Arlen's 1924 *The Green Hat*, and others.) Dupont is like Duke both in its academic selectivity and in the character of its students—intelligent and ambitious but not intellectual, and by tradition highly "social." Most of all, Dupont is like Duke in its grafting of a Division I basketball program onto a superior academic curriculum.

Through Charlotte's innocent and mascara-less eyes, we encounter three separate student worlds at Dupont, each of which conceives of itself in aristocratic terms. There is the world of Nationally Ranked College Basketball as personified by Jojo Johanssen, Dupont's only white starting player. There is the world of high society and romance, in the persons of the members of the Saint Ray fraternity and their sorority girlfriends. Finally there are the Millennial Mutants, who represent dorkdom, left-wing political sophistication, and intellectual drive.

The novel's plot unfolds through Charlotte's search for a boyfriend within these three worlds and through the complex relationships among the three candidates for that honor: Jojo the basketball player, Hoyt Thorpe the gorgeous fraternity boy, and Adam Gellin the Jewish intellectual. Adam, as a tutor to the basketball team, breaks the academic rules by writing a paper from scratch for Jojo. As a student journalist, Adam also affects Hoyt's fate when he uncovers a political scandal: the previous spring, Hoyt had stumbled upon the governor of California being fellated by a Dupont coed—and had beaten up the governor's bodyguard.

A weakling and a virgin, Adam nevertheless has the power to shape the destiny of the two physically stronger boys. Jojo's future career in the NBA depends on Adam's ability to evade a charge of plagiarism leveled by a "tenured radical" professor who has it in for Dupont's pampered basketball players. Hoyt's future career as an investment banker depends on keeping quiet the story of the governor and the coed—which Adam, wanting desperately to make his mark as a "public intellectual," has no interest in doing.

All three boys vie for Charlotte's mind, her body, and her soul. It is Charlotte who inspires Jojo to take his college courses seriously (which nearly leads him to disaster). Charlotte also becomes the inadvertent beneficiary of the chivalry of Hoyt Thorpe in a parking-lot brawl; later he invites her, wardrobe-deprived though she is, to an overnight "formal" in Washington where she is introduced to vodka and sexual intercourse. Adam, in love with Charlotte, explains to her that there are ideas so powerful that they create reality. "The important thing," he instructs her, "is to be an aristo-meritocrat and live at that higher level."

WOLFE'S CAMPUS, in short, is a place where minds—the minds of the Millennial Mutants, or the mind of Socrates, whose ideas are so painfully acquired by Jojo—meet bodies, not only the incredibly ripped bodies of the major-sport athletes but the well-tuned bodies of the white boys who merely play lacrosse and indeed of most of the students we encounter at Dupont, male and female alike. Minds and bodies—another way of saying that what separates this novel most decisively from its predecessors is not its subject matter but its reach.

Wolfe's earlier novels were about human passions and frailties, illuminated against a sharply observed social background. *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is different. It is a novel of ideas, a philosophical novel. And that is why it has been set in the world of the university. The splendors and miseries of undergraduate life fascinate Wolfe not because, as the critic Elaine Showalter surmised, he is an aging and envious voyeur, "titillated by the sexual revolution that has arrived on campus since his own student days," but because he regards the college campus as a vale of soul-making.

In Wolfe's imagination, the campus has clearly supplanted the big city as the place where the American character is created and represented. It is the place where people can still try on new personas, experiment without risk (or so they think), and remake themselves on a scale no longer attainable in the great cities. And it is the place where America is most American—where different social classes, sexualities, and ideals jostle, mix, enter into dramatic conflict, and sometimes achieve resolution. The novel's earnestness and high seriousness about these matters are what make it more interesting, if sometimes less amusing, than *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), and infinitely gayer and more vivid than *A Man in Full* (1998).

In keeping with the mind-body theme, the presiding spirit in *Charlotte* is the new science of neurobiology, with which Wolfe is fascinated but whose most extreme claims he instinctively resists. In a course on introductory neurobiology that Charlotte attends—the subject is the material or genetic control of human life, the "whimsicality" of such notions as free will, the self, individuality—Dupont's Nobel laureate quotes a "very interesting young neuroscientist" as follows:

> Let's say you pick up a rock and you throw it. And in mid-flight you give that rock consciousness and a rational mind. The little rock will think it has free will and will give you a highly rational account of why it has decided to take the route it's taking.

Just so, the professor instructs his charges, you, the members of this class and this generation, will one day "be able to decide for yourself: 'Am I really . . . merely . . . a conscious little rock?'"

It is in opposition to this chilling little parable that the phrase "I am

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Assessment of Arafat

Will his death open the way for peace?

Yasser Arafat dominated the scene of the Arab/Israeli conflict for over fifty years. Now that he has died, many believe that new leadership will emerge and that peace will finally come to the Holy Land. Is that a valid assumption?

What are the facts?

Review of an Evil Life: In order to analyze the situation, it is necessary to assess Yasser Arafat and what he has wrought. A Latin proverb admonishes us to say nothing but good about the dead. The Bible, on the other hand, in Proverbs (11:10) states that "when the wicked perish, there is shouting." Following that admonition, one can say without hesitation that Yasser Arafat was certainly one of the most wicked men of this and the last century. While he was not able to work on as vast a plane as Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin, he was certainly in the same evil league.

Here are just a few "highlights" of this monster's career. He was personally responsible for the murder of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics; he directed the execution of two American diplomats in Sudan; he masterminded the cold-blooded murder of 25 people – 21 of them children – in Ma'alot, a city in northern Israel; he authorized the takeover of the Italian cruise ship ACHILLE LAURO, and the murder of a wheelchair-bound American citizen. He was the originator of the infamous crime of suicide bombings and brought it to a horrified world. He was the inventor of the hijacking and bombing of airplanes that killed thousands. And that is just the tip of the evil iceberg.

> "Arafat's main interest was not the creation of a Palestinian state. His primary goal, ceaselessly pursued, was the destruction of Israel."

As a result of the disastrous Oslo Accord, Arafat was allowed to return to Israel from his exile in Tunis. In the last year of his presidency, President Clinton convened a Camp David summit with Arafat and Ehud Barak, then the prime minister of Israel. Arafat got virtually everything he ever demanded, except the "right of return" of the descendants of the Palestinian "refugees," which would have been the end of the Jewish state.

Little Hope in the New Man: Arafat rejected this more than generous offer and decided instead to start his bloody "intifada," which by now has cost over 1,000 Jewish lives – and three times as many Arab lives and untold thousands wounded on both sides. The Palestinian economy is in ruins. More than one-half of its population is without work; famine would be rampant were it not for the constant infusion of cash by the U.S. and other western countries (most of it pilfered by Arafat and his cohorts and stashed in secret accounts all over the world).

But the greatest harm, the greatest crime that Arafat committed was to poison the minds of two generations of Palestinian Arabs against Israel and against the Jews. Evil propaganda permeates all Palestinian media. Palestinian children, beginning with pre-school, learn to hate Jews and Israel, and to become "*shahids*" – martyrs and suicide bombers. The State of Israel does not appear in Arab textbooks; the area is described as "Occupied Palestine." Even with the best effort, it may take at least two generations to change that mind set.

In retrospect, it seems almost incredible and a cruel joke that such a man, such a fiend, would have received the Nobel Peace Prize and that presidents, prime ministers and secretaries of state of major countries would have attended this man's funeral in Cairo. Our president at least had the good taste to send only a lower-level state department functionary.

Much hope is pinned on Mahoud Abbas, who appears likely to emerge from the inevitable power struggle as the new leader of the Palestinians. But it is most likely that this hope is misplaced. Sure, Abbas obviously has a better tailor and a better barber than Arafat had, and that might make him appear more congenial to Western audiences. But he was Arafat's second-in-command for decades and shares his late master's views in all respects. He got his doctorate in political science from a Soviet university and wrote his thesis on the Holocaust never having taken place. He has already put himself on record that in any negotiation with the Israelis to which he might agree, he will never waver on his insistence on the right of return of the Palestinian "refugees." Since that is obviously a non-starter, it appears that no peace, no settlement can be reached with this man.

Arafat is dead and has gone to his "reward," wherever that might be. He left his people and the territory that the Israelis had generously yielded to him in a shambles. He refused to create any institutions that could possibly become precursors to a government. He looted the treasury that foreign countries – mostly, of course, the Untied States – had generously provided for the welfare of his constituents. He implanted hate and poisoned the minds of his people. His main interest never seems to have been the creation of a Palestinian state; his primary goal, ceaselessly pursued, was the destruction of Israel. With that heritage, it will take a very long time, if it can ever happen at all, that peace between Arabs and Jews can come about.

This ad has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Charlotte Simmons" presents itself to Charlotte. By excelling in class, she believes she has in fact discovered "the life of the mind" and her own best self. As with her virtue, she will, in the course of this book, lose her grip on the life of the mind and repeatedly find it again. The boys—not only the fraternity brothers and the basketball players (with the exception of Jojo) but also Adam with his disfigured notion of the uses of mind—are not so fortunate.

WOLFE IS concerned with these young people as individuals, but also as the foci of social, biological, and psychological forces. His young men and women arrive at Dupont "determined" not only by their parents' social rank and success but also by their moral inheritance. Jojo is nearly seven feet tall, but his prowess as a white basketball player was fostered by his father, who insisted on dropping off his twelve-year-old son at the basketball courts of inner-city Trenton. Both Adam and his opposite, Hoyt, are shaped by the weakness and phoniness of their respective fathers (and the indulgence of Adam's mother). Behind Charlotte is "Momma"—her seriousness, her recognition that her daughter is destined for a greater world than Sparta, her uncompromising belief in Charlotte's intelligence, together with her demand for obedience and self-discipline. (Curiously absent is any lasting impact from Momma's "fervent" Christianity, which does not appear to impinge on or figure in Charlotte's life—perhaps because it does not interest Wolfe.)

But for all its stress on determining factors, *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is full of idealism—the philosophic kind. In his or her own way, each of the characters discovers that, for better or worse, ideas really do move the world. Their epiphanies include Jojo's intellectual awakening to the Greek philosophers, Adam's acknowledgment of his desire to be the kind of intellectual who can "do a country's thinking for it," Hoyt's recognition that his father has not, after all, taught him the infallible secret of how to manipulate others, and, most of all, Charlotte's effort to maintain her sense of control over her own life and fate. Struggling to *be* Charlotte Simmons rather than a pathetically self-deluding rock, she is Tom Wolfe's equivalent of the earnest young clergymen in the novels of George Eliot or Mrs. Humphry Ward, striving to maintain their religious faith in the face of Lyell's *Geology* and the Higher Criticism.

Admittedly, Charlotte's belief in mind and will over matter is sometimes revealed to be an illusion—as when she is being seduced by the heartless aristocrat of Saint Ray:

> She wanted to please him, to . . . have him eager for her, like an animal. That was what made her . . . *thrill* inside. He was a beautiful animal at the peak of his rude animal health. And yet she could always control him. . . . To see his love and his lust and his very mind, for that matter, turned white-hot and forged into a single super-concentrated alloy—whose shape *she* would determine—that was all she wanted!

This particular attempt of Charlotte's to deploy idealism in the real world ends badly. But others do not. I hope I will not spoil things if I suggest that at the end of the novel she finds herself in precisely the same position as the Soul-Charioteer whose passionate quest for the beauty that is truth can be read about in Plato's *Phaedrus*. *I Am Charlotte Simmons* is sometimes embarrassing, sometimes painful to read, sometimes thrilling, always full of energy. It is above all a deeply interesting attempt to make the novel, once again, into something more significant than personal testimony—or than "Wolfean" reportage, however vivid.

Off the Dole

American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare

by Jason DeParle

Viking. 422 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

EIGHT YEARS ago Americans ended welfare as they knew it. To judge from their silence on the subject during the 2004 election, they have never looked back. Perhaps that is not surprising. The public always hated welfare, largely because it undercut so many bedrock American values—self-government, personal responsibility, up-from-the-bootstraps hard work. As the debate over welfare reform heated up in the mid 1990's, "it seemed the very idea of America was on trial."

So writes Jason DeParle in his new book. As a reporter covering urban poverty for the *New York Times*, DeParle epitomized liberal skepticism about welfare reform; indeed, he played a not inconsiderable role in setting out the case against it. Yet in *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*, he has managed to transcend partisanship to produce an important and illuminating work, one that will confound liberal readers of the *Times* and hard-line critics of welfare alike.

American Dream is a tale of two cities—Milwaukee and Washington, D.C.—and of two alien, though interdependent, cultures: the inner-city ghetto and the public-policy labyrinth dedicated to addressing its problems.

As the book begins in 1991, Angela Jobe, a single mother of three young children, arrives in Milwaukee from Chicago to take advantage

KAY S. HYMOWITZ *is a contributing editor of the Manhattan Institute's* City Journal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the city's generous welfare payments and modest rents. She is joined by Jewell Reed, the sister of Angela's imprisoned boyfriend, who is pregnant and also a single mother, and later by her cousin Opal Caples, who has three daughters and a tragic weakness for cocaine. The three women go through a mind-numbing assortment of alcoholic, deadbeat, and violent men. Struggling to keep the lights on and the refrigerator stocked, they take a series of dead-end jobs and cash in on payments from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a federal program set up in 1935 to help widows but by the 1990's part of a support system for never-married inner-city mothers.

American Dream is not, however, just another volume in the library of underclass dysfunction. DeParle also explores the ambiguous interplay between life on the street and public policy. This part of the narrative also begins in 1991, as a then-obscure governor of Arkansas starts to refine the messages of his nascent presidential campaign. As much as any politician, Bill Clinton understood that everyone—from white Yankee farmers to black North Carolina factory workers—hated welfare. He also suspected that the poor were more resilient than most liberals thought. He wanted to reform welfare in order, as he once told DeParle, to give the poor "the same piss and vinegar" that immigrants possessed. He also believed that welfare fed racist stereotypes, and thereby impeded his hoped-for revival of a truly progressive Democratic party.

Yet, for reasons that remain unclear, once in the presidency Clinton fumbled the issue. Under the leadership of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the combative Republicans who swept into Congress in 1994 made welfare reform their own cause. Though Gingrich overplayed his hand at times, Clinton was faced in the end with a largely Republican-designed bill that went far beyond anything he had imagined when he first took up the subject: block grants that ended federal entitlements and gave states control over most policy details; five-year time limits; and (in a reversal of standing policy) a requirement of work before recipients received training and education. Though he was opposed by most of his cabinet and ended up alienating some of his closest friends, Clinton signed Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) into law in August 1996. AFDC was no more.

The results stunned just about everyone, including proponents of the bill. To put it simply, the welfare rolls collapsed. Within five years, more than 9 million people—3 million families—had left welfare, adding up to a decline of 63 percent. No region of the country was untouched.

Gertrude Himmelfarb

THE ROADS TO MODERNITY

From the distinguished cultural critic,
a revisionist history of the British, French,
and American Enlightenments

"A masterful and elegant book,"

says James Nuechterlein in *Commentary*.

"Gertrude Himmelfarb wants, as she says at the outset of her masterful and elegant new book, 'to reclaim the Enlightenment — from critics who decry it and defenders who acclaim it uncritically, from postmodernists who deny its existence and historians who belittle or disparage it, above all, from the French who have dominated and usurped it'...It is a valuable book, and most valuable in its reconstruction and appreciation of the British Enlightenment."

"Exciting intellectual pugilism

...Himmelfarb mounts a vigorous argument that the British [Enlightenment] was reformist rather than subversive, respectful of the past and present even while looking forward to a more egalitarian future."—**Scott McLemmee, *N.Y. Times Book Review***

Published by Knopf **aaknopf.com**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INCHARDI

Novels by J. Inchardi

A ROSE COLORED BOAT

Learning of his rabbi's death, our hero sets sail for Brooklyn.

URIAH

Uriah appeals, but it's his lawyer's first case, and The Supreme is presiding.

EXPENDABLE

A Jew accuses The Times.

Sirius Books, PO Box 177
Freeport, Maine, 04032

- $22.00 each -

Out-of-Print

Books

of Jewish Interest
Bought & Sold

We buy collections of all sizes

Schwartz Judaica
1934 Pentuckett Ave.
San Diego CA 92104-5732

www.SchwartzJudaica.com

E-mail & hardcopy catalogs

E-mail: Schwartz@cts.com
Phone/Fax: 619 233-5833

DeParle describes in great detail how Angela's new hometown of Milwaukee, which by the early 90's had become the nation's fastest growing ghetto, turned into the most impressive success. Years before TANF was law, Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson had seized the initiative on the issue by hiring a devoted reformer named Jason Turner, who made jobs his central concern. Turner established a strict requirement that those welfare recipients who could not find work in the private sector had to take community-service jobs. For the first time, recipients who failed to keep up their end of the bargain got smaller checks, just as they would at Denny's or Sears.

The speed of the decline in welfare rolls was also surprising. Experts had assumed that the five-year time limit would be the do-or-die moment. Instead, welfare recipients quickly grew impatient with the hassles of the new, stricter bureaucracy. What observers had failed to grasp was that most recipients had never relied solely or even primarily on welfare payments; more than half of them worked during the course of a year. The three women profiled by DeParle get money from boyfriends, from sporadic stints in fast-food joints, from female cousins who camp out in their apartments, or from *their* boyfriends. When welfare disappears, they simply fall back on these other sources of income.

Angela Jobe is a perfect example. With an erratic but long work history unknown to the welfare system—a history that includes jobs at Popeye's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and even the post office—she matter-of-factly cashes her last welfare check and takes a position as an aide in a nursing home. Her response to the revolution that had kept policy mavens tossing at night? "I always work anyway."

In fact, though DeParle makes the case that welfare reform was the most successful anti-poverty policy of our time—black and Hispanic poverty rates had sunk to all-time lows by 2001—he also shows that its effects loomed far larger in government offices and the media than they did on the streets. On paper, the fortunes of many recipients certainly improved. Angela is able to purchase a car and, working double shifts, sometimes earns at a rate of $20,000 a year; at one point she is even able to take her children on a summer vacation. Bowing to necessity, Jewell eventually ends up working steadily in the shipping line at a tool-making plant. Yet both women struggle.

Several years after leaving welfare, Angela is still relying for as much as half of her income on food stamps, housing aid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Even so, she sometimes cannot afford to have her car repaired, pay her electricity bill, or keep food in the house. When DeParle prods her to give an opinion of welfare reform, she snaps in exasperation, "I don't pay no attention to that crap! I ain't thinking 'bout welfare." Even during her nearly eight years on welfare, Angela viewed herself as "strong, self-reliant . . . a survivor." When welfare dries up, she just finds other ways to keep afloat.

Not all recipients fare even that well. DeParle gives examples of some who drop off the rolls into complete ruin because they are too depressed or mentally unstable to maneuver through an increasingly demanding system. In other cases, incompetent agencies exacerbate their problems. As Opal sinks deeper into cocaine addiction, a caseworker at a state-funded for-profit agency called Maximus simply gives her a check—with predictable consequences. The caseworker, who is eventually arrested for a minor crime and becomes jobless herself, is just one of a rogue's gallery of Maximus employees, including profligate managers who spend $100,000 in public funds on promotional mugs and backpacks. Lost in "a bu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reaucratic black hole," Opal sells all her furniture, loses custody of her children, and finally disappears into the shadows of Milwaukee.

Jason DeParle has produced a superb book—honest, richly observed, and artfully written. Rare for a policy book, it manages to make subjects like Jason Turner, the eccentric wonk-architect of the Wisconsin reform, live and breathe; even Newt Gingrich comes across as a complex brew of revolutionary big thinker and fierce partisan. DeParle shows how Angela Jobe's experience represents the sort of transformation that struck early skeptics like himself as little more than a fantasy. Although her job at the nursing home is wearying and backbreaking, DeParle is struck by how it helps her to transcend her isolation and "tap . . . a vein of energy and imagination dormant in other parts of her life."

That said, *American Dream* is no unambiguous trophy for reform enthusiasts. The experiences of Angela, Jewell, and Opal belie many of the standard conservative answers to the problems of the ghetto. Though educated in a parochial school and raised by a God-fearing mother, Angela still becomes a high-school dropout and single mother. After welfare reform, she acquires extraordinary work habits, traveling in the predawn dark to suburban nursing homes and taking on double shifts. But her self-discipline does not rub off on her children—one becomes pregnant, another drops out of school.

As for Opal, she was married and working before she had her first child, yet by the end of the book, she is the one giving birth to a crack-addicted baby. In a chapter that describes the impoverished childhood of Jewell's mother in the Mississippi Delta, DeParle makes a compelling case that illegitimacy, fatherlessness, sexual abuse, and family breakdown all predated the welfare-supported ghetto—and are likely to survive it.

So where does policy go from here? Most reviewers of *American Dream* have agreed with DeParle's two major lines of recommendation. First, that the working poor should receive more support in the form of childcare, transportation aid, and training. Something is amiss, after all, when a welfare-supported drug addict like Opal receives free health-care while the conscientious Jewell cannot afford to get help for her bleeding ulcers. Second, that the next frontier of anti-poverty efforts is dealing with the absence in these communities of husbands and fathers. It is a measure of how far welfare reform has moved the debate that DeParle and others like him now support marriage initiatives they once would have scorned.

Abraham's Promise

Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations

Michael Wyschogrod

edited and introduced by R. Kendall Soulen

ISBN 0-8028-1355-0
267 pages • paperback • $24.00

"Michael Wyschogrod's penetrating vision and fearless approach to old questions have long stimulated and instructed serious students of Judaism. Everyone who cares about the dimensions of Jewish faith will benefit greatly from this collection of his papers." — **Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz**

"Wyschogrod is the most interesting and most astute Jewish theologian writing today. His insights flow from the deep sources of Judaism in the Bible and the rabbinic tradition and profoundly illuminate not only Judaism but Christianity as well. No one interested in Jewish-Christian relations can afford to miss these lucid and engaging essays." — **Jon D. Levenson**

"A must for theological minds that value the importance of hearing both testaments whenever Scripture is read and reflected upon." — **Marvin R. Wilson**

4585 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Anti-poverty advocates often point to drug abuse and depression as the prime "barriers to work" for poor women, but as DeParle observes, they neglect to mention the one he found the most destructive: what Angela calls the "too-cool, too-slick motherfucker men." From the segregation-era South to the post-welfare-reform Midwest, the husbands available to poor black women have often been unfaithful, drunken, abusive, pimping—or all of the above. Father-hunger is epidemic throughout *American Dream*, and the sobs that fill the car as DeParle drives Angela and her children home from visiting their father in jail echo hauntingly in the mind of the reader.

Though "healthy" marriages are surely an essential next step in attacking the ills of the inner city, *American Dream* offers a subtle caution on this score that DeParle himself misses. Angela's story suggests that being middle-class is as much a state of mind as it is a regular paycheck and a wedding ring. She demonstrates the "piss and vinegar" that reformers hoped to instill in ex-recipients, but few of the other bourgeois virtues that have long allowed immigrants to leave the slums of the Lower East Side or Chinatown.

Instead of using a tax windfall to buy the car she desperately needs to take her to a better-paying job, Angela spends it on Nintendo video games and bedroom furniture for her sons. Beyond keeping her children out of jail, she has few ambitions for them. She lets her crack-addicted cousin and alcoholic boyfriend move in with her and says nothing when her daughter befriends a prostitute. When DeParle asks her why she does not intervene, she answers huffily, "I'm not supposed to let my kids visit her 'cause that's her chosen profession? . . . You don't judge people about stuff like that!" Married parents or no, it is a good bet that a child hanging out with cocaine addicts and prostitutes is not going to move up and out.

Thanks to welfare reform, the work ethic may be on the rise in the inner city, but the same cannot be said of middle-class ideals of child-centeredness, probity, and cultural self-improvement. Many believed that these values were sapped by welfare. The hard lesson of *American Dream* is that work by itself will not bring them back.

The GI's Rabbi

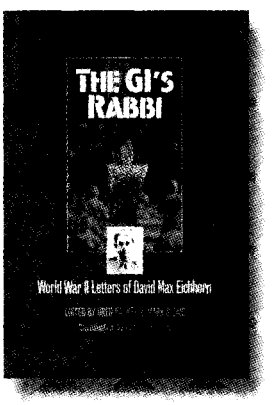
World War II Letters of David Max Eichhorn

Edited by Greg Palmer and Mark S. Zaid

Introduction by Doris L. Bergen

"This is a wonderful book. Eichhorn's letters provide a compelling glimpse into the everyday life of a gifted rabbi through some of the most difficult times our nation ever experienced. His recollections of combat are poignant and powerful and his struggles to provide for his soldiers show the compassion of a gentle pastor and the passion of a proud and committed Jew. His encounter with the Holocaust is the raw material for history."—**Michael Berenbaum**, author of *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust*

"Takes the reader directly into the life and death of war in France, Belgium, and Germany as well as into Dachau concentration camp and the fate of Jews under Nazi rule. A great read."—**Gerhard L. Weinberg**, author of *A World at Arms*



Modern War Studies

312 pages, 26 illustrations, Cloth $29.95

University Press of Kansas

Phone (785) 864-4155 · Fax (785) 864-4586 · www.kansaspress.ku.edu

Interfaith Dialogue

Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations

by Michael Wyschogrod

edited by R. Kendall Soulen

Eerdman's. 253 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by
David Hazony

OURS IS a time when the academic study of Judaism flourishes, but when learned exploration of Judaism's central *ideas* has become rare. For that reason if for no other, the appearance of *Abraham's Promise* is a welcome event. Perched on the cusp of today's political and theological entente between Judaism and Christianity, Michael Wyschogrod's thoughtful essays are the work of a scholar who has spent a lifetime developing a comprehensive religious philosophy, and who looks to share it with Jews and Christians alike.

An Orthodox Jew, Wyschogrod was born in 1928 in Berlin of Hungarian-Jewish parents; his family came to the United States in 1939. At Yeshiva University, he studied with the great talmudist Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, but his interest in theology was first piqued

DAVID HAZONY, *a new contributor, is the editor-in-chief of* Azure *and the editor of* Essential Essays on Judaism, *a collection of writings by Eliezer Berkovits.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at New York's City College, where he was exposed to the thought of Soren Kierkegaard. "I knew from the beginning," he writes of the Danish Christian existentialist, "that here was someone of decisive importance to me."

At least half of Wyschogrod's published works have either addressed the relationship between Judaism and Christianity or appeared in an interfaith context. In addition to his dissertation (published in 1955 as *Kierkegaard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence*), his books include *Jews and "Jewish Christianity"* (with David Berger, 1978), an attempt to refute the arguments of Christian missionaries, and his most important work, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (1983), in which God's relation to the Jews is described in the context of the Christian doctrine of incarnation.

Abraham's Promise, which combines published and unpublished essays, is thus the capstone to an already lengthy dialogue with the Christian faith. Throughout, Wyschogrod's questions are the right ones: the meaning of sin and atonement, chosenness, faith after the Holocaust, the importance of Christian theology for Jews. Unfortunately, many of the conclusions he draws are highly debatable when they are not altogether ill-founded.

The purpose of Jewish-Christian dialogue, as Wyschogrod sees it, is not simply mutual understanding but something far more profound. "Dialogue with a theology as sophisticated as that of Christianity," he writes, "advances Judaism theologically and compels it to examine problems it might not otherwise have done." For this reason, many of the essays on Judaism in the book's first half are framed in a context that is equally accessible to Jews and Christians. Eschewing formulaic discussions of the Sabbath, the development of halakha (religious law), or the meaning of Jewish history, Wyschogrod meditates instead on "Sin and Atonement," "The One God of Abraham and the Unity of the God of Jewish Philosophy," and "Judaism and Conscience." Even those essays of more narrowly Jewish interest tend to conclude with a rhetorical turn to Christian readers.

Similarly, the second half of the book—"Jewish-Christian Relations"—deals not so much with the relation between the two communities as with the impression Christianity has made on the beliefs of one thinking Jew. In "Paul, Jews, and Gentiles," Wyschogrod delves into the significance of a Jew's conversion to Christianity. In a chapter on the great Protestant theologian Karl Barth, and in the book's concluding essay, he delineates the profound effect of Christian thought on his own Judaism.

The Edwin Mellen Press

An International Scholarly Publisher of Advanced Research

The Edwin Mellen Press has published over 6000 titles in various fields by highly accredited authors. Among these excellent works, we are proud to highlight:

A Selected Socio-Legal Bibliography on Ethnic Cleansing, Wartime Rape, and Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda

by Hilmi M. Zawati and Ibtisam M. Mahmoud

"This is such a work of scholarship and will stand for many years as a tacit but eloquent memorial to those whose lives were so tragically ended or forever scarred." – ***Eric Ormsby, Professor of Islamic Studies and Former Director of Libraries, McGill University***

0-7734-6260-0 $139.95 / £84.95 597pp. 2004

To see all our books, author profile and more information , please visit

www.mellenpress.com

For ordering information, please call (716) 754-2788

The Edwin Mellen Press is seeking new works for its International Politics and World Peace Studies Collection. Please submit your proposal today at www.mellenpress.com to see how you can publish your scholarly book and have it featured in our next catalog.

415 Ridge Street, Lewiston, New York 14092 Tel:(716)754-2266 Fax: (716)754-4056

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wyschogrod is of course quite aware that Judaism is not the same as Christianity. While the latter ultimately concerns God's love for the world, his own religion, he asserts, focuses specifically on a people. More than a community of ideas or faith, Israel is a family, and its bonds to God are as unseverable as those of a child to a parent. Although the universalist view developed by Paul has "a certain plausibility," Wyschogrod writes, believing Jews know that God loves them with a special love because of His love for Abraham. And it is this love—not, in the end, Israel's acceptance of the divine commandments—that is responsible for the Jewish people's continued protection from the tides of history.

BOTH OF Wyschogrod's theses—that Jewish theology needs Christian theology in order to advance, and that peoplehood is *the* distinguishing feature of Judaism—are fertile and suggestive. But do they, at least as he formulates them, make sense against the backdrop of Jewish tradition itself? That is a far different question, and one concerning which Wyschogrod regularly disappoints. Indeed, he describes a Judaism that at times will seem thoroughly alien to anyone familiar with classic Jewish texts.

The problem is apparent at the outset, where Wyschogrod lays out the ground rules for a new Jewish philosophy. In his view, the preservation of the Jewish people is not simply a central tenet of Judaism, but one that trumps all other beliefs. Hence, any Judaism that alienates a major Jewish group is not Judaism:

> *No interpretation of Judaism which is unable to construct a plausible platform for Jewish unity is a viable interpretation of Judaism.* Any Jewish philosophy which can cut off a significant portion of the living Jewish people from the house of Israel thereby demonstrates its own Jewish inadequacy. [emphasis in the original]

Such a dedication to unity is admirable; but it is also powerfully constricting. After all, any commitment to an idea precludes commitment to contrary ideas. To insist that such commitments are not "viable" is to bring to a halt any serious debate over principles. It is also historically indefensible. Throughout the ages, Baalists, Sadducees, early Christians, Karaites, Sabbateans, and others were rejected by mainstream Judaism precisely because of their ideological commitments.

There are, moreover, central ideas in Judaism other than unity: the belief in a single God Who created the universe; a conviction of God's revelation to man and concern for human history; and, on the moral plane, a dedication to human justice, charity, property, communal responsibility, equality before the law, and limits to the power of rulers. It is true, as Wyschogrod first put it in *The Body of Faith*, that "the foundation of Judaism is the family identity of the Jewish people as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." But God chose Abraham's descendants not at random but "Because I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do what is just and right" (Genesis 18:19). One may question whether this family has consistently lived up to the Abrahamic ideal; yet to deny that Judaism is founded on ideals, and not just on a bond of blood, is to strip it of part of its essence.

WYSCHOGROD'S LACK of interest in Judaism's ideals comes into relief again in his approach to Jewish law. Here he abruptly abandons the emphasis on family unity for a doctrinaire insistence on strict obedience

NEW FROM BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY PRESS

American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise

Shulamit Reinharz and Mark A. Raider

The first and only complete exploration of the role of American women in the creation and support of the State of Israel from pre-State years through the struggles of Israel's first decades.

Includes several eyewitness documents and personal testimonies that throw light on previously neglected facets of American Jewish and Zionist history.

Paper, 356 pp. 1-58465-439-2.
$26.00

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY PRESS
University Press of New England
(800) 421-1561 • www.upne.com

U·P·N·E

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to God's commands for obedience's sake. Why, he asks, did God enjoin Adam from eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? Because, once having eaten it, Adam would "be in a position to know why the good is good and the evil, evil. It seems that God does not wish man to have this knowledge. He is to obey God in order to obey God and for no other reason."

Not only does God not require moral reasoning, the very act of doing something "because it is the right thing to do" strikes Wyschogrod as a *revolt* against God. This is what he says about the biblical ban on murder:

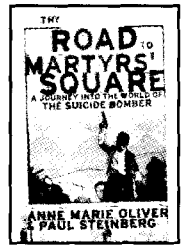
> Do I really understand why God wants me not to murder? I know that He does not want me to do it and that should be enough. The moment I refrain from murder on other grounds than that God forbids it, I have embarked on a slippery slope.

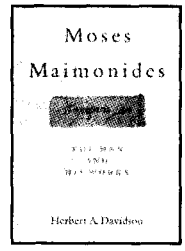
Leaving aside the deeply problematic nature of this statement, we encounter here a major contradiction of Wyschogrod's own test for the "viability" of Judaism. If we have no access to moral reasoning, and must act solely according to God's explicit commands, then what are we going to do about Reform Judaism, with its belief in the individual's autonomous search for right and wrong? The apostle of unity does not answer this question; indeed, he does not seem to notice that he has come up with the most divisive definition of Judaism imaginable.

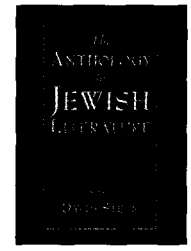
More seriously still, in insisting that, for Judaism, basic moral ideas about murder are a "slippery slope" toward rebellion against God, Wyschogrod effectively declares that Judaism has nothing important to say about what is objectively good for individuals, communities, nations, or the world. This is surely not the Bible's intention. In its two dozen books, the divine laws are themselves nearly lost in a deluge of aphorisms, moral stories, and value judgments declaring one thing to be "right in the eyes of the Lord" and another to be an "abomination." Even the commandments of the Torah are frequently presented together with their reasons ("Do not oppress the stranger . . . for you were strangers in Egypt"). Biblical characters often judge their own behavior as well as the behavior of those around them without recourse to explicit orders from God.

One need only think of Abraham's famous appeal on behalf of the denizens of Sodom—"Will the Judge of all the world not do justice?"—to recognize that, in the biblical view, there are higher truths to which even God is held to answer. In rabbinic literature, the same anti-authoritarian thrust is most famously exemplified by Rabbi Yehoshua's statement that the Torah is "not in heaven"—in other words, that men of learning and

New From OXFORD







THE ROAD TO MARTYRS' SQUARE
A Journey into the World of the Suicide Bomber
A. M. OLIVER and PAUL F. STEINBERG
"A chilling look inside the mind of Palestinian suicide terrorists. Using a vast assortment of primary sources gathered in the region—from personal testimonials to martyr videos to posters and graffiti—Oliver and Steinberg reproduce the personal journeys and public expressions of martyrs and martyrdom in often shocking detail. This important book shows that support for suicide bombing in Palestine goes far beyond a tiny fringe and compels us to ask how such violent behavior can become acceptable and supported by a society at large."
—Robert Pape, author of *Dying to Win: The Logic of Suicide Terrorism*
$26.00

MOSES MAIMONIDES
The Man and His Works
HERBERT A. DAVIDSON
"There is nothing quite like this volume: a full-scale, exhaustive summary and reappraisal of Maimonides' life and work. Scholars have tended to present Maimonides and his work in a piecemeal way, focusing on legal or philosophical or scientific aspects. Davidson, however, emphasizes the holism of Maimonides' thought, in which medicine is a divine directive and philosophy is mandated by the law. He is thus able to draw connections often overlooked. All in all, this volume is a significant achievement by a pre-eminent scholar."
—Daniel H. Frank, *University of Kentucky*
$45.00

JEWISH DAILY LIFE IN GERMANY, 1618-1945
Edited by MARION A. KAPLAN
"This book represents a major contribution to the social history of German Jewry. It offers a wealth of detail on the lives of ordinary Jews who have largely escaped historiographical scrutiny and have thus implicitly been robbed of historical agency in favor of members of the Jewish elites of wealth and learning. The book depicts not only the social, economic, and cultural transformation of German Jewry across three centuries but also—and more importantly—the tremendous variety of Jewish life across the jigsaw puzzle of the German lands."
—Derek Penslar, *University of Toronto*
$45.00

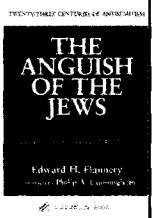
THE ANTHOLOGY IN JEWISH LITERATURE
Edited by DAVID S. STERN
From the Talmud to the latest collection of short stories, the anthology has been a ubiquitous presence in Jewish literature throughout its history, and has played a seminal role in the creation, transmission, and preservation of Jewish culture since ancient times. And yet of all literary genres the anthology may be the most denigrated and least understood. This volume represents a major first step in the study of the genre and of the different functions it serves as a literary form and as a medium of canonization.
$60.00

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
At bookstores everywhere.
Visit us online at www.oup.com/us

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From Paulist Press

The Anguish of the Jews 23 Centuries of Anti-semitism



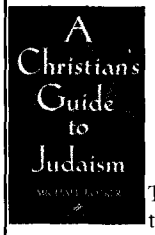
(Revised and Updated)
Edward H. Flannery
A Stimulus Book

A celebrated classic, this groundbreaking work did much to expose the reality of historical anti-Semitism in the United States and around world.

"A major contribution to Jewish-Christian relations."
—Marc Tanenbaum

"A definitive work."
—Benjamin Epstein

0-8091-4324-0
400 pages $21.95 Paperback



A Christian's Guide to Judaism
Rabbi Michael Lotker

The fascination of Christians with Judaism has taken many forms over the years, from virulent anti-Semitism to intense interest in the religion of Jesus. *A Christian's Guide to Judaism* explains the similarities-and key differences-between the Christian and Jewish faiths.

0-8091-4232-5
176 pages $12.95

Available at bookstores or from Paulist Press
To order, call 1-800-218-1903
or fax 1-800-836-3161
www.paulistpress.com

piety must decide the meaning of divine rulings according to their own best efforts. The commitment to normative divine law is not the same as a disregard for, let alone a deprecation of, that necessary search for understanding.

IT IS when he comes to Christianity that Wyschogrod's downplaying of Judaism's ideas becomes most troubling. Take his approach to the Trinity, which he sees merely as "a problem for rather than a complete break with Judaism"; it is in fact much closer to the latter than the former. Or take his interpretation of divine incarnation in the form of Jesus. Building on *The Body of Faith*, with its theme that God dwells among the Jews as the soul dwells in the body, he asserts boldly that "the Christian teaching of the incarnation of God in Jesus is the intensification of the teaching of the indwelling of God in Israel by concentrating that indwelling in one Jew rather than leaving it diffused in the people of Jesus as a whole."

To be sure, Wyschogrod is quick to dampen the revolutionary implications of this statement. Perhaps, he concedes, the Jewish view of incarnation is not quite so literal, or so fleshy, as the idea that Jesus *is* God. Yet the difference, he insists, is far more subtle than most people are willing to recognize. Judaism may not endorse incarnation, but it has "incarnational elements" that, if "more diffuse than the Christian version," are nevertheless "very real."

But there are significant reasons why Judaism historically took issue with the idea that God became flesh, and it is telling that Wyschogrod does not cite any traditional sources to justify his idiosyncratic interpretation. Indeed, he could not. By and large, the Bible and Talmud draw an unambiguous distinction between God and the world, and certainly between God and Israel. The reason is simple: if Israel were a literal or straightforward incarnation of God, then commandments, covenant, free will, divine punishment, laws, and a host of other central Jewish ideas and institutions would become incomprehensible. To turn the Jewish people itself into God, with whatever disclaimers or qualifications, is hardly an advance toward a better understanding either of Judaism or of its relation to Christianity.

ULTIMATELY, THE test of a Jewish philosopher lies in his ability to articulate essential ideas of the Jewish tradition in terms a modern reader can both respect and embrace. Concerning one such essential idea, *Abraham's Promise* does indeed meet the test, offering a powerful defense of the centrality of Jewish nationhood at a time when unity seems increasingly out of reach. Similarly to Wyschogrod's credit is his pioneering openness to the new and extremely important theological dialogue between Judaism and Christianity.

Regrettably, however, in other crucial aspects *Abraham's Promise* presents a skewed and deeply misleading understanding of the Jewish tradition. In that sense, the "promise" of its title does not just remain unfulfilled but is very nearly betrayed.

Rx

Miracle Cure: How to Solve America's Health-Care Crisis and Why Canada Isn't the Answer

by Sally C. Pipes

Pacific Research Inst. 219 pp. $14.95 (paper)

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

THE UNITED States is the only major Western nation that does not guarantee access to health care to its citizens. In 1993, Presi-

---

JONATHAN KAY *is the comment-pages editor of Canada's* National Post.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dent Clinton, with the controversial assistance of his wife Hillary, launched an ambitious bid to address this anomaly. Such was the scale of their failure that since then few mainstream politicians have dared to revisit the idea.

Yet the issue of health reform refuses to go away. According to a recent poll by the Commonwealth Fund, 80 percent of Americans believe that the country's health system should be either "fundamentally changed" or "rebuilt completely." And as John Kerry emphasized in his presidential campaign, 45 million Americans lacked health insurance in 2003, an increase of 5.2 million since 2000.

One result of these trends has been something of a comeback for the idea of universal coverage. Days before the election, the *New York Times* published a lengthy op-ed calling for the establishment of "an independent agency that would set national health-care policy, collect medical fees, pay claims, reimburse doctors fairly, and restrain runaway drug prices—a single-payer system that would eliminate the costly, inefficient bureaucracy generated by thousands of different plans." In other words: health care, Canadian-style.

As Sally C. Pipes notes in *Miracle Cure*, Canadians are proud of their health system. They see socialized medicine as a defining element of their national character, like cold weather and ice hockey. Politicians frequently sloganeer against "American-style" or "two-tier" health care. No other Western nation, in fact, takes a more interventionist approach. Not only does Canada provide its citizens with universal care; it has made user fees and private insurance *illegal* for health services that are publicly insured.

A Canadian by birth who now heads the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco, Pipes also knows that, by American standards, the medical care in Canada is often second-rate. The system suffers in particular from a serious shortage of advanced diagnostic tools like Computerized Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanners. The city of Ottawa, with a population of more than a half-million, is served, for instance, by only one MRI machine. The whole country has just two Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanners. This compares with 250 in the United States and nearly 20 in Belgium.

Why the glaring gap? After paying for doctors, nurses, medicine, and overhead, the cash-strapped Canadian provinces—which, under the country's constitutional scheme, are responsible for health care—simply have no money left over to make the necessary investment in new equipment. In the U.S., competition en-

Please join us for the Metanexus Annual Conference

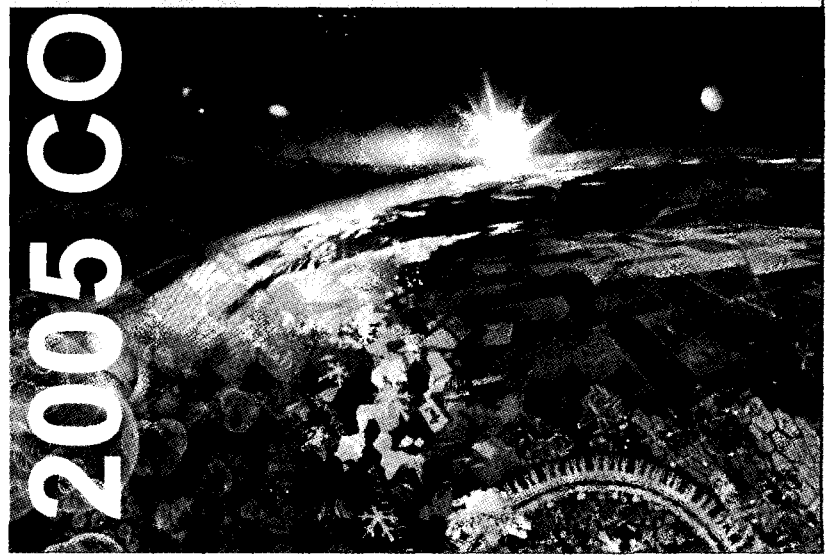
Science and Religion: Global Perspectives

An international, interfaith, interdisciplinary conference

June 4-8, 2005
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Call for papers
Deadline February 15, 2004

For further information, please go to
www.metanexus.net
or contact us at 215.789.2200.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sures that hospitals have the necessary tools: patients who are ill-served can switch providers. But under Canada's health-care monopoly, market forces are absent.

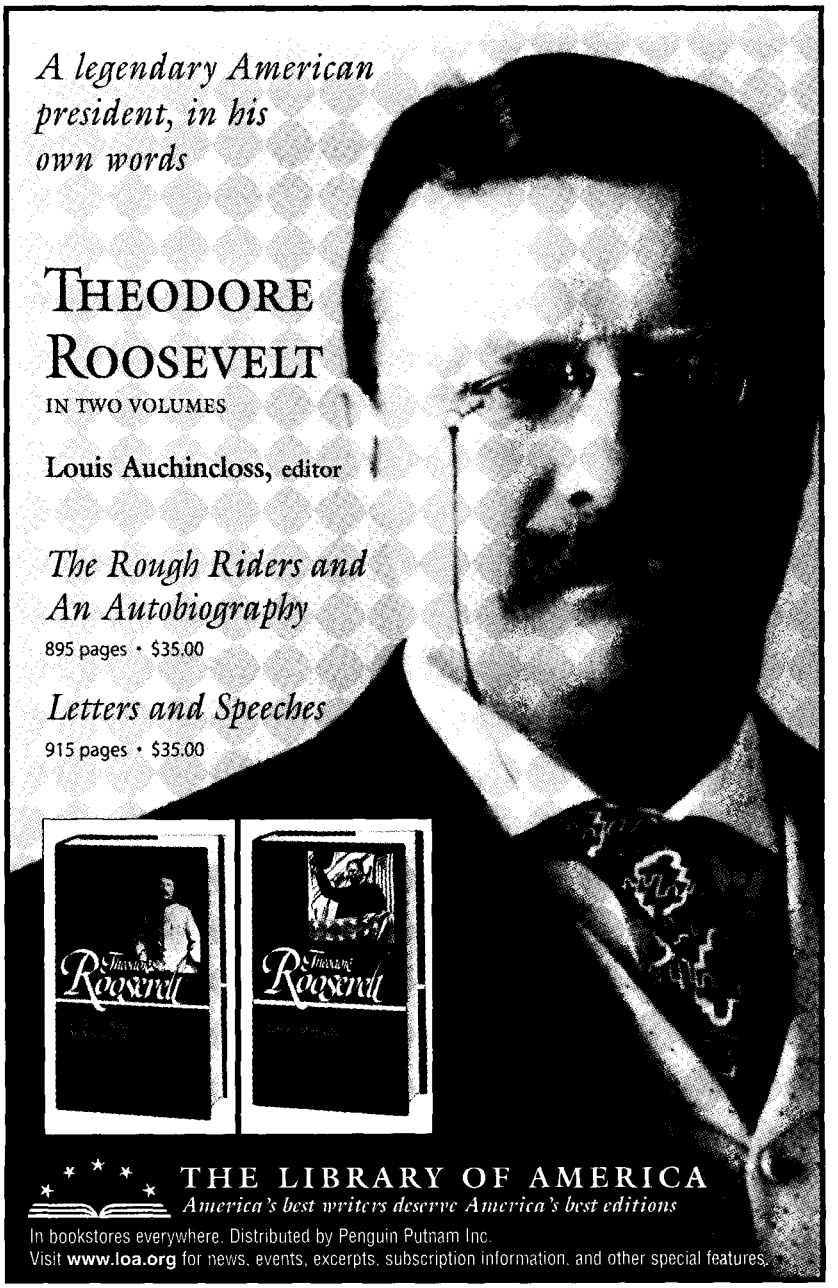
Because Canada's system is publicly funded, it does not produce the sort of horror stories so common in the American media—of working families losing their health insurance when a wage-earner loses his job, for instance, or of heartless HMO's that deny payment for life-saving procedures. Instead, the scandals revolve around overburdened supply. Last spring, Pipes relates, the mother of premature twins had to be airlifted to Alberta because no hospital in British Columbia was able to admit her. In Quebec, hundreds of hospital patients have died from the bacterial pathogen *Clostridium difficile*, an outbreak blamed on squalid conditions in overcrowded wards. Getting an angiogram can take a month. Last March, a class-action lawsuit was filed on behalf of ten thousand breast-cancer victims in the province who had been forced to wait more than eight weeks for radiotherapy.

Indeed, waiting lists have become a fixture in Canadian health care. According to a survey conducted by the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute, the total waiting time between a general practitioner's initial referral and the start of treatment averaged eighteen weeks across a sample of twelve specialties. For Americans used to visiting their personal physician on Monday and a specialist on Tuesday, such delays would be intolerable.

The same impatience is increasingly evident among wealthy Canadians. In fact, many of the elites who most aggressively trumpet the Canadian system's egalitarianism are quick to bundle themselves and their relatives off to hospitals in Buffalo, Boston, or Seattle rather than wait for treatment at home. Pipes doubts whether Canada could even maintain the pretense of universal care if it were not for the fact that wealthy Canadians reduce demand by taking their health needs across the border.

THOUGH THE Canadian and American systems may appear to be polar opposites, they are, Pipes shows, quite similar in many ways. Government may not provide Americans with universal coverage, but it is by far the largest player in the health-care market. In 2001, public outlays accounted for no less than 45 percent of health spending in the U.S. (the figure is about 70 percent in Canada). This includes funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans Administration. As Pipes writes, "U.S. health care is more socialist than not."

Even America's private system is in large part a creature of government. The popularity of employer-funded health plans dates to the 1940's, when wage-and-price controls forced companies to add in-


A legendary American president, in his own words
THEODORE ROOSEVELT
IN TWO VOLUMES
Louis Auchincloss, editor
The Rough Riders and An Autobiography
895 pages • $35.00
Letters and Speeches
915 pages • $35.00
THE LIBRARY OF AMERICA
America's best writers deserve America's best editions
In bookstores everywhere. Distributed by Penguin Putnam Inc.
Visit www.loa.org for news, events, excerpts, subscription information, and other special features.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kind benefits as a means to boost remuneration for valued workers. The plans remain popular because of their favorable tax treatment, which results in a $140-billion indirect subsidy. (With this sum included, the public share of health spending in the U.S. rises from 45 to 56 percent.) And, of course, the government also has a major say in the benefits offered by private plans, regulating everything from minimum hospital stays following breast reconstruction to the administrative status of Medicare patients who fall from spacecraft.

Another similarity identified by Pipes is that neither government-funded medicine in Canada nor employer-sponsored coverage in the U.S. provides an adequate economic incentive for consumers to limit their demand for care. From the patient's perspective, care is effectively free, or close to it. This helps to explain why costs are skyrocketing on both sides of the border. In Canada, the provinces devote nearly a third of their total expenditures to health. If current trends continue, that number may exceed 50 percent by 2020. In the U.S., premiums for employer-sponsored health plans have increased at three times the rate of workers' earnings during the last four years.

Like its Canadian counterpart, the U.S. health-care system is burdened, Pipes argues, by "too much government, too much bureaucracy, and too many regulations." Her prescriptions for reform aim to strengthen the "sovereignty of the patient."

This would mean, for starters, changing the tax code. As U.S. law now stands, workers have little incentive to opt out of their employer-provided plans. Health benefits provided by employers come to workers tax-free, while other health plans must be bought with after-tax income. The result is that many Americans are effectively denied the one clear benefit that a private health-care system is supposed to deliver: choice. Washington, Pipes argues, should level the playing field, allowing Americans to pay for their health coverage out of pre-tax income whether they purchase it individually, at work, or through a church, community group, or trade association.

A second major reform that Pipes advocates is to change the way people think about health coverage. Insurance, she notes, "works best when it's used infrequently":

> That's why life, homeowners, and automobile insurance are all affordable—because we don't want to die, and we can't use car insurance to change the oil and fill up our gas tanks. Health insurance should work along the same lines. Ordinary health maintenance should not be treated as an event that triggers insurance coverage.

In practice, this would mean moving away from managed care and adopting low-premium, high-deductible health plans that would protect patients from catastrophic costs but require them to pay minor costs out of pocket. Like President Bush, Pipes champions the expansion of health savings accounts, which would permit Americans to set aside money for routine health-care expenses in a tax-free roll-over account. Since patients enrolled in such plans would be required to pay for most routine care themselves, they would have an incentive to ration their consumption, shop for value, and bring down costs.

Reformers in both Canada and the United States too often idealize the system that stares back at them from the other side of the border. Having lived and worked in both nations, Pipes offers a more realistic assessment. As she sees it, both nations have increasingly embraced the same failing, statist model.

Though the Clinton health-care plan went down to defeat a decade ago, *Miracle Cure* is a powerful reminder that conservatives cannot af-

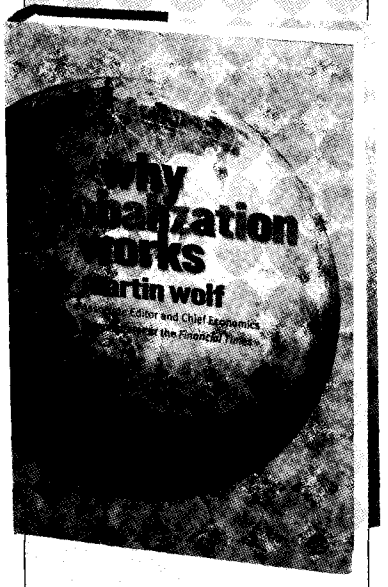
Why Do So Many Believe The Myth That People Are Born Homosexual?

National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH)
consists of mental health professionals, researchers, and others whose goal is to make effective treatment available to those who wish to change their sexual orientation.
www.narth.com Phone: **818-789-4440**

Jews Offering New Alternatives to Homosexuality (JONAH)
offers services to the world-wide Jewish community for the treatment of unwanted same-sex attractions.
www.jonahweb.org E-mail: **Jonahhelp@aol.com**
Phone: **201-433-3444**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Definitive."★
Why Globalization Works
Martin Wolf
"Splendid. . . . The definitive treatment of the subject."
—*The Economist*★



"Accessible and clearly argued. . . .
A wealth of material on every page."—Bruce Bartlett, *The Wall Street Journal*

"Powerful. . . Should help move the public debate away from whether to be for or against globalization and towards how best to strengthen the working of the global economy."—Stanley Fischer, *Financial Times*

Yale University Press yalebooks.com

ford to be complacent about the issue. With consumer dissatisfaction high, it is only a matter of time before universal coverage reemerges as a campaign issue. If the U.S. is not to go the way of Canada, market-oriented reformers must find ways to make the private system give Americans the kind of health care they want. The ideas of Sally C. Pipes are a good place to start.

Brain Scan

On Intelligence
by Jeff Hawkins
with Sandra Blakeslee
Times Books. 272 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Kevin Shapiro

ELEMENTARY BIOLOGY teaches us that many of the vital parts of the body have forms that follow their function. The heart has tubes and valves like a hydraulic pump; the lungs expand and deflate like bellows; the ear has an intricate apparatus of bones and membranes that transmit sound like a stick beating on a drum. The fact that each of these organs can be understood in reasonably simple physical terms has enabled us to construct clever mechanical prostheses—like artificial hearts, respirators, and cochlear implants—that do their jobs, more or less well, when things go wrong.

It goes without saying that this is not true for the brain, which resembles nothing so much as a mass of pinkish goo. Aristotle, reasoning from inspection, asserted that the brain was a reservoir for cooling the blood; as late as the 1890's, most biologists believed that it had roughly the structure of a sponge. Only at the turn of the last century did the great anatomist Santiago Ramón y Cajal begin to unlock the secrets of the brain's architecture, describing in exquisite detail the ways in which its cells, called neurons, articulate with each other by sending out a myriad of protoplasmic wires (dendrites) and cables (axons).

Cajal noted, moreover, that in the outermost and largest part of the human brain—the tortuously furrowed cerebral cortex—the neurons appear to be arranged in six layers, with axons from each layer projecting to neurons in other layers in a stereotypical fashion. Undoubtedly this observation was momentous: since the cortex is almost certainly the seat of intelligence (it is large in humans, small in rats, and almost nonexistent in fish), it follows that understanding its construction is key to understanding the mind. Such understanding, however, remained beyond Cajal's grasp. With the allegorical flair of a Spanish mystic, he likened the beautiful and enigmatic neurons of the cortex to "butterflies of the soul."

Since Cajal's time, biologists have learned a great deal about the physiology of neurons. We know how they are born, migrate to their ultimate sites within the brain, form connections, and communicate with other neurons by releasing packets of chemicals that produce electrical signals. What we have not learned, however, is the purpose served by the six-layered organization of the cerebral cortex. Put simply, the matter of how the structure of the brain produces thought remains almost totally mysterious.

ENTER JEFF HAWKINS. A computer engineer by training, Hawkins is best known as the inventor of the PalmPilot and other handheld gadgets. But his true intellectual passion lies elsewhere: as he tells it, he has searched all his life for a comprehensive and intuitive explanation of how the brain works. Nor does he make any secret of his goal: coming from an engineering perspective, Hawkins believes that a working model of the cortex can serve as a blueprint for truly in-

KEVIN SHAPIRO *is a research fellow in neuroscience and student at Harvard Medical School.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

telligent machines, capable of solving abstract problems, testing theories, and making reliable predictions about everything from the weather to political unrest.

On Intelligence, written with the help of the veteran *New York Times* science writer Sandra Blakeslee, is Hawkins's attempt to lay out just such a model, and to do so "in a way that anybody will be able to understand." True to this aim, *On Intelligence* is written in simple, straightforward prose, with short sentences and few rhetorical flourishes. There is some unavoidable technical jargon, but it is kept to a minimum. Hawkins provides numerous examples and thought experiments along the way, encouraging the reader to discern the workings of the cortex in experiences as diverse as appreciating a melody and drying oneself with a towel.

Hawkins's basic insight, borrowed from the neurobiologist Vernon Mountcastle, is that if the structure of the cortex is basically uniform, every part of it must be performing a similar function. To be sure, the brain processes different kinds of information in different parts of the cortex: visual sensations feed into an area at the back of the head, while motor commands are sent out by neurons residing in a strip that lies just in front of the ears. But Hawkins's idea is that all of this information is processed in basically the same way. No matter what the sensory input, the brain is essentially receiving patterns of stimulation with spatial and temporal properties.

When we look out at the world, we perceive a display of light that changes over time; when we touch something, we feel a texture that changes as we move our fingers. Because these patterns have certain regularities—the parts of an object tend to move together; eyes tend to occur with noses, and so forth—the cortex can use them to build a model of the world. This, according to Hawkins, is memory, and it has a number of important properties.

First, the cortex stores memories in the form of sequences of patterns: the succession of notes in a song, the eye-nose-eye sequence of a face, even the sequence of towel rubs and pats we use to dry off. Second, these memories are self-reinforcing, or "auto-associative": as soon as one part of a pattern is activated, the entire pattern follows. Hum the first bar of a song, and the rest comes to mind automatically. Third, memories are, at some level, stored in a way that is independent of irrelevant variations; we recognize a melody regardless of pitch, and a face regardless of the angle from which we see it.

On Intelligence proposes that these properties of memory allow us to make predictions based on the information that has accumulated in our cortices. When you climb into a rental car you have never seen before, you nevertheless recognize its various parts, and can predict that if you engage the sequence of actions appropriate to driving (turning the key and pressing the gas pedal), the car should move; if it does not, something is wrong with the world, or at least with the car. This kind of prediction-making based on memory is what Hawkins calls intelligence, and it constitutes what he believes is the primary function of the cortex.

Hawkins goes into some detail about the ways in which the six-layered structure of the cortex is particularly suited to storing sequences of auto-associative memories. The essence of his proposal is that the cortex is arranged in a hierarchy: parts of the brain that are responsible for representing very small bits of patterns (say, particular sounds) send specific projections to higher-up areas that represent progressively larger and more abstract bits (notes, intervals, bars, songs). The higher-up areas in turn send feedback to lower areas, instructing them what to expect next and monitoring unexpected events. At the top of the hierarchy are those areas that integrate and coordinate memories of different types, checking the sum of what we perceive against the model of reality we have built by experience.

"Predictability is the very definition of reality," writes Hawkins. Therefore, because the cortex can predict, it is capable of apprehending the world. Creativity, in this view, is nothing more than the ability to make uncommon predictions by analogy—likening one pattern to another ("love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs"; "life is like a box of chocolates") and deriving predictions from it. Imagination is nothing more than the generation of predictions that feed into other predictions.

There is no question that this memory-prediction model is simplistic. Hawkins cheerfully admits that he has ignored or glossed over reams of neuroscientific data—both for the sake of accessibility to the lay reader and because he believes that rendering the subtleties in the scientific literature would only serve to obscure the big picture he wants to paint. The question is, however, whether this big picture is basically accurate and just needs to be fleshed out in the details, or whether it is so vague and underspecified that it provides no useful outline at all.

The framework laid out in *On Intelligence* has considerable intuitive appeal. As Hawkins illustrates with numerous examples, one of the general properties of intelligence is the ability to make sense of the world, and to make predictions about the present and the future based on what we already know. The mind is particularly adept at seeing patterns, and can even be tricked into evoking them based on the scantiest of sensory data; this is why we see faces in Martian rocks and in oddly shaped corn flakes. Indeed, it is probably why we dream. Random firing of neurons in the visual part of the cortex may activate part of a visual pattern; this pattern is automatically completed by other parts of the cortex, and that in turn triggers the retrieval of associated sights, sounds, and memories. The filtering of such activity up and down

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cortical hierarchy creates a seamless perceptual experience that has no basis in reality, but nevertheless conforms to our knowledge about the structure of the world.

Even on a sympathetic reading, however, Hawkins's treatment of the facts is disturbingly cavalier. He adopts some rather unconventional hypotheses, not because they are particularly well-supported by scientific fact but because they fit with his theory. For example, because his argument stipulates that memories are formed in the cortex, he embraces the idea that the hippocampus, generally considered to be an ancient part of the brain involved in memory formation, is actually a newly evolved structure that registers violations of expectancy.

At the same time, Hawkins's appreciation of cognition seems in many instances to be grossly unsophisticated. He claims that "when we assign a name to something, we do so because a set of features consistently travels together." Anyone who has taken a freshman course in philosophy knows that this kind of assertion is liable to collapse as soon as we try to identify the definitional features of the "something," be it a "game" or a "bachelor," or to explain why a cat that has been doused in musk and painted to look exactly like a skunk is nevertheless still very much a cat.

But the weakest link in Hawkins's theory is also its main selling point: namely, his assumption that the cortex is an all-purpose learning device capable of solving virtually any problem by making predictions based on prior experience. In fact, a preponderance of evidence suggests that much of what we know—or are capable of learning—is *not* determined by experience, but is hardwired into the brain before birth. Indeed, it might logically be impossible to learn many of the things that we learn if we did not enter the world without some innate assumptions about its structure: we would simply never get enough input to make the correct predictions.

A prime example is language. Hawkins rather glibly asserts that we are born without knowledge of language, just as we were born without knowledge of houses; he assumes that "the cortex has a clever learning algorithm" that naturally extracts grammar from exposure to speech, without any dedicated language machinery.

Everything we know about language and the brain suggests that this is false. Children appear to be born with brains genetically rigged to acquire human language; monkeys, despite their well-developed cortices and the heroic efforts of many a psychologist, never seem to get much more than the capacity to ask for a banana. Even otherwise intelligent humans do not learn language if they are not exposed to it in the critical period before puberty. In this light, Hawkins's prediction that his wonderfully plastic cortical algorithm can one day be adapted to produce computers capable of "intelligent speech recognition" seems wildly off the mark—unless, perhaps, one is willing to ascribe intelligence to the linguistic prowess of a gray parrot.

AND THIS gets to the heart of the problem with *On Intelligence*. The cortex as Hawkins envisions it is no doubt capable of solving many problems, and it is probably reasonable to assume that the principles he sets forth can be applied in order to engineer things like "smart" cars that can navigate obstacles, and "smart" cameras that recognize objects from different angles. But it is worth keeping in mind that rats, too, can do these things. In this respect, both rats and probably even lobsters may be more intelligent than contemporary computers. Nevertheless, there remains an important qualitative distinction between this kind of intelligence and the intelligence possessed by human beings.

Hawkins's theory leaves no room for such a distinction. On his account, the primary difference between the human cortex and the rat cortex is that the human cortex is much bigger. This is true, of course, but it is also true that the human cortex is differently wired, and comes equipped with a set of specialized functions—language, music, and numerical reasoning, to name a few. Most likely, these are not solely the product of greater computing power; if they were, we would presumably be able to chart flawless courses over thousands of miles like migrating geese, and remember the locations of hundreds of objects like squirrels who stash acorns in the winter.

Instead, we take wrong turns and lose our keys, but we can speak and write books about intelligence. This is the unique endowment of human beings. It is implemented, somehow, in the cortex, but in the end, Hawkins does not get us much closer to understanding how.

IN ONE of the numerous and distracting autobiographical interludes that punctuate *On Intelligence*, Hawkins informs us that in 1986 he left a lucrative position in Silicon Valley to enroll as a graduate student in biophysics at the University of California at Berkeley. He does not tell us what later impelled him to leave academia and return to the entrepreneurial world, but one imagines he realized that the grindstone of research was getting him no closer to his goal of a grand theory of the brain.

The younger Hawkins might have benefited by consulting the advice of Cajal, who in 1916 wrote with penetrating disdain about brilliant thinkers who preferred constructing audacious theories to discovering facts by precise observation. "The essential thing for them is the beauty of the concept," he observed. "It matters very little whether the concept itself is based on thin air, so long as it is beautiful and ingenious, well-thought-out and symmetrical." Hawkins's theory is all of these things. And that may be precisely what is wrong with it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE
HOOVER
PRESS

ANTI-AMERICANISM
IN EUROPE
A Cultural Problem

Russell A. Berman

A revealing look at how anti-Americanism has proven to be a useful ideology for the definition of a new European identity.

list $15.00 ***sale $10.00***

Call 800.935.2882

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Major foreign policy differences, especially regarding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have contributed to the deterioration of relationships between the United States and our traditional allies in Western Europe. There can be no doubt that some European leaders stonewalled the Bush administration on Iraq in order to provide lateral support to the Kerry campaign. With the Bush victory, however, Europe may choose the wiser path of mending fences with Washington.

Yet **an anti-American spirit has been unleashed in the European street, and it will be difficult to tame, not only because of foreign policy but also because of economics**. Poor economic performance in Europe feeds a politics of resentment, and the scapegoat has been the United States.

In 2000, the European Union (EU) launched the ambitious Lisbon process, a reform agenda enabling the EU to become "the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, creating more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" by the year 2010. Lisbon was also a declaration of competition with the United States for global economic primacy. A high-level commission headed by former Dutch prime minister Wim Koks recently determined, however, that European economic performance was deeply disappointing. The gap with the United States has been growing larger, and the Lisbon goals are further away than ever.

Third-quarter growth in the United States was reported at 3.7 percent, a figure eliciting disappointment because it was lower than some had expected. Compare this, however, with the euro economies, where growth in 2004 may only reach 1.8 percent and is predicted to climb at most to a breathtaking 1.9 percent in 2005. Why is growth so slow? The Koks report blames politicians for failing to carry out necessary reforms.

The inability to reform—in the labor market, in impediments to trade, and in the social welfare network—is precisely where the problem of anti-Americanism enters. Efforts to deregulate and liberalize the economy are easily tagged with negative labels: French pundits denounce them as "Anglo-Saxon"; German politicians shun them as the feared "American conditions." **Although Europe urgently needs structural reform, it hides behind the smoke screen of anti-Americanism**, which is really anticapitalism. Rejecting America because of capitalism, however, means repressing the European tradition of free market thinkers from Adam Smith to Friedrich von Hayek.

Many Europeans believe that their slow economy is the price they must pay for their elaborate welfare state. This, however, turns out to be an illusion. A recent study by the Austrian Labor Council shows that the portion of GDP devoted to the social safety net is greater in the United States than it is in Europe; although European states generously pay out more in welfare benefits, they take much more back through higher tax rates.

At the end of the day, anti-Americanism as a block to economic reform inhibits European prosperity. The more Europeans demonstrate, the farther they fall behind. Good-bye to Lisbon.

—Russell A. Berman

Russell A. Berman is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University. He is the author of Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem *(2004).*

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISRAEL BEGINS HERE

As the national airline for 55 years, EL AL is proud to have assisted those in need, reunited thousands of families and provided hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants with a chance for a new life in Israel.

Today, EL AL offers the most nonstop flights between the U.S.A. and Israel on state-of-the-art aircraft. Every seat on our 777 and 747-400's has a personal video monitor, offering a wide selection of in-flight entertainment. You can also earn free tickets and upgrades with EL AL's Matmid frequent flyer club. And, there are no blackout dates!

Your Israel experience begins the moment you board EL AL.

EL AL

It's not just an airline. It's Israel.

www.elal.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED